

JESUS
THE DIVINE LAYMAN

GOD'S
GIFT TO HUMANITY

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GIFT TO HUMANITY

By
CHARLES W. CELL

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I VERY HUMBLY DEDICATE THIS BOOK
TO THE HONOR AND GLORY OF MY
ADORABLE LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

MY DEVOTED WIFE
ADA CELL
AND OUR PRECIOUS DAUGHTER
MARY ELLEN CELL
HAVE BEEN A GREAT INSPIRATION
TO ME IN WRITING



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Divinity

PREFACE

IF it were possible for the writer of this book to say a thousand different complimentary things which should be said about Jesus, and say them as they should be said, even then he would have fallen far short of the yearnings of mind, heart, and soul to pay the proper tribute gloriously due Him. Words are not sufficient to express all that Jesus means to the world. The grandeur of all His glorious creations and revelations is only a partial portrayal of all His marvelous daily reminders.

The writer very humbly feels it is presumptuous to attempt writing a book about Jesus over nineteen hundred years after His crucifixion on the Cross of Calvary, especially since so many fine books have already been written about Him. More convincing is the fact that the Bible is so superior to all others combined which have been, or ever will be, written.

The writer has for many years felt a definite urge to compile from a layman's viewpoint some of the more important truths concerning Jesus and His Kingdom Church founders, all of whom were laymen.

The Church of Jesus Christ is the greatest organization in the world, and wields by far the most universal influence. It has been loaded down with all the faults possible for mankind to bring into it; but, in spite of all this, a marked success is in evidence. It has operated for over nineteen hundred years upon voluntary support; it is the only institution that has ever successfully done this. Yet it is greater

today than ever before, because the power of Almighty God is behind it, and it is going to succeed, for Jesus said it would, and enough wise people are believing it to help bring it to pass.

Our personal attitude toward Jesus Christ determines our eternal destiny. Therefore, our supreme objective should be to get right, and stay right with Him; then go out and help all others we can to do likewise. This should be the everyday program of everyone's life. Jesus makes it plain that every wise person will do this, for it is the most important thing in the world to be done for time and eternity.

Time is the only infallible test of true greatness. Jesus has stood that test above all others. However, humanity has been very slow in realizing this, because His greatness is of an eternal order. All the battles ever lost for the good of mankind were lost because of the faults of Satan and perverted mankind. Jesus carried the battle scars of sacrifice He made for you and me up into Heaven with Him when He ascended.

The great layman Paul gave to the Gentile world our Christian doctrine, and he, as well as all the other lay disciples of Jesus, made soul-stirring appeals for all laymen to loyally support His Church and every Christian leader who honors Jesus Christ. This is a universal order of the Lord God Almighty.

Jesus came into this world for a definite and eternal purpose. We are the all-important part of this purpose. Wise men have made loyalty to Jesus the dominating factor of their lives, and, without exception, all who have done so have recommended to all who follow to do likewise. Applied Christianity is the infallible solvent of every human and Divine problem. We must apply all of Jesus' teachings and

commands instead of only the parts that suit our fancy, which is all too much the common order of today.

The things that Jesus repudiated while here upon earth by His spoken words are condemned by His written words now; and the things He commended then have been glorified for over nineteen centuries, and will be for eternity.

God gives, too, and lights the flame of the soul in every human heart and life; and it is our bounden duty and blessed privilege by and through the power of the Holy Spirit to keep that eternal flame burning for the security of our eternal welfare.

Satan's hateful revenge against God through mankind constitutes the greatest controversy in history, because it so tragically changed the eternal destiny of all humanity from the beginning of mankind.

The Holy Bible Record gives us an authentic elongated review of the many definite incidents that took place between these protagonists, also prophesies of things yet to take place affecting the humanity of the world.

The people who do not believe in the existence of Satan and his emissaries will doubt the certainty of the triune God; yet every official record that vouchsafes God verifies Satan. Jesus very personally attested the existence and presence of Satan and his following, which is infallible proof of their existence.

Satan's wily deceptions of mankind from the beginning consummated his fiendish desire to wreak his vengeance against God after being defeated in his traitorous war of rebellion against all Heaven, in which he was defeated, cast out, and down to this earth.

Revelation 12 should be read by all. *"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed*

not ; neither was there place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. . . . Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. . . .”

The profound recordings in the book of Revelation alone are sufficient to convince all wise-thinking and -reasoning people to believe in the truth of Satan’s evil intentions toward God and mankind.

Genesis 3 records Satan’s beginning his assaults upon mankind by quizzical criminations, then recriminations, reaching a climax of diabolical deviltry by calling God a liar, then assuring Eve that if she would do the very thing God had commanded not to do, she would become wise as the gods. There was a modicum of truth in this promise of wisdom, but the tragic results all down through the centuries have proven it is the wrong kind.

There are no words of scorn in diction or phraseology sufficient to portray Satan’s fiendish deviltry from the beginning of mankind. He did not wreck humanity because he hated man, created out of the dust of the earth, but to revenge God, who did so create mankind. The greatest everlasting war of history is over the souls of mankind, which God has ever tried to save and Satan to destroy.

Humanity has persistently and everlastingly allied itself for the most part with Satan, the universal enemy of God and mankind.

God’s spiritual lightnings have struck often and hard in this world since the beginning of his creations thereon. The first of these appeared when the holy spirit of God mightily moved and God said, “*Let there be light : and there was*

[Jesus Christ the] *light*." And that lightning of light has never gone out in this world and is shining more brightly today than ever before.

The first three verses of the Holy Bible portray to us the triune God. Genesis 1:1, "*In the beginning God.*" Gen. 1:2, "*And the Spirit of God moved.*" Gen. 1:3, "*And there was [Jesus Christ the] Light [of God].*"

God's spiritual lightning struck terribly in the Garden of Eden upon Adam and Eve and Satan, pronouncing a curse and an enmity between the seed of the woman (Jesus) and the serpent (Satan). But mankind became the pitiful and tragic sacrifice in this holocaust of destruction by and through disobedience to God from the beginning.

Another of God's spiritual lightning strokes came by way of the flood of water upon the earth to destroy the pollutions of sin caused by Satan upon all mankind except Noah and his family, who were saved by way of the ark, which symbolized Jesus Christ, who came later to save the world from a flood of sin that has rolled down through the centuries like a tidal wave seemingly irresistible.

But the greatest of all God's irresistible spiritual lightning strokes was the giving and coming of Jesus Christ to this world, "*That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*"

"*For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*"

But Jesus Christ has portrayed yet another greater spiritual lightning stroke which is to take place. Matthew 24:27, "*For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*"

Jesus profoundly said, "*Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*"

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I

JESUS' PROFOUND MYSTICAL COMING

JESUS was sent from Heaven to earth, the only God-child of history. He greatly humbled Himself to come in the spirit of physical weakness. He lived and grew in the power of the Holy Ghost, into the strength of God, but again humbled Himself to die in the spirit of meekness. His profound mystical supernatural advent into visible existence into this world towers above all others, as the heavenly luminaries tower above all here upon earth. Jesus' coming as He did was so marvelous by contrast that it becomes incomparable.

Adam, the created son of God, was brought up from nothingness; Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, was sent down from Heaven's highest Holiness, emptying Himself of His Divine Lordship of power, becoming the minute atom of Deity physically incarnated. In that He was born of the pure virgin of Nazareth, making Him also a child of mankind. Thus He became both God-man and man-God in the humblest manner possible by being born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger amid the darkest of darkness and the tyranny of tyrants.

We should ponder well the prophetic, angelically announced coming of Jesus. It bulks large enough to take the whole world in and all of humanity. The Bible records several Heaven-sent names for men on earth, but none with the magic and halo of glory accorded Jesus, whose name is truly "above every name," because it means SAVIOR. His

brilliance became so dazzling that it portrays the lives of every one of us upon Heaven's indelible record for time and eternity.

There have been many great epoch-making events in the world affecting the future of mankind, but they are all insignificant in comparison with that of Jesus Christ. He became the astounding mystic of the world, and still is, in that He ever lives on and on and on, forevermore. Millions have profited by this; the tragedy is that the billions have not. The world was deep in moral pollution and spiritual stupor when Jesus came. He ushered in the gladsome ray of hope. There were a few then, as there are few now in comparison, who were in a spirit of expectancy and wakefulness, and the message came to them. It has come to us again and again. "For unto you is born a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Things do not just happen with the Lord God Almighty; the glory of the Lord does not just happen to shine on some folk more than others. Jesus unfolded Himself to the whole world, "that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Surely God could not have made it any more universal or better than He did, or He would have done so.

If the record of Jesus Christ and the entire Bible had been written as a book of fiction, instead of the truth that it is, billions who have refused to personally profit by it would read it and say that if it were only true it would be a great ideal; but the purity and righteousness of Jesus' words and examples are so high and holy that most of us refuse to adhere to His commands, because they condemn all of us in some manner. Then we are prone to say, "I do not read the Bible because I do not understand it." This is false; we do understand it, and it condemns us; hence, we turn away from it and the infallible teachings it contains.

The shepherds out on the Judean hills believed, acted, and proved their belief to be correct. These shepherds represent the poor, or common, people of the world. But the wise men came also to prove that the star which led them to Jesus was not some vague and indefinite object, but a genuine guidance of that unseen Holy Spirit, who ever stands ready to light and guide all who believe and act as the shepherds and the wise men did, and millions following have done since.

There is more proof in the Bible that Jesus is the Heaven-sent Son of God than that He was the son of Mary. We cannot read the first verse of the New Testament intelligently without the Old, which over a thousand times indicates by prophecy and otherwise the coming of Jesus. The New Testament gives the lineage from Abraham down to Jesus, and from Jesus back to Adam, showing that God is an infallible bookkeeper over a period of about four thousand years, without a jot or tittle necessary missing. This book also shows God to be a good trial balancer, and that He is keeping books on you and me.

Matthew 2 shows the satanic bedevilment of King Herod in ordering the heinous massacre of all babes and two-year-old children in Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof. This holocaust of child-murdering was the incarnate devil obsession of King Herod to destroy the child Jesus. Little wonder we find Jesus later being so tender and loving toward children (and scornful of all that are not). They became the first martyrs in his behalf.

Jesus was saved from this satanic attempt upon His life by Heaven's direction and protection until the time appointed for Him to die on the cross of Calvary for the humanity of the world, when He voluntarily laid down His life for the salvation of the world.

"Greater love hath no man than this."

II

JESUS THE YOUTH MARVEL OF THE WORLD

LUKE gives us the first recorded words of Jesus, in the second chapter: "*How is it that ye sought me, wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*" *How* is a word of meaning and power. Joseph in Egypt used it when tempted: "*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*" This has come ringing down through the centuries, a warning bell, the red and green lights, the lightning's flash, the peal of thunder, the ominous cloud. *How* we see, hear, read, and heed determines much in our lives. "*How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*" This is what Jesus came especially to bring to the world, and if we call ourselves a part of this world, then we have our individual responsibility, which we alone will have to account for at the judgment bar of God Almighty.

Luke being a physician, and having much to do with children, very likely was Mary's family doctor. He has given us much of interest and importance which the other Gospel writers left out. We must ever keep in mind that Luke did not write his first book until after Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven. Doubtless, he was one of the hundred and twenty in that upper room, praying and waiting for the fulfillment of the promise of Christ that He would send the Holy Spirit (which promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost). Luke says:

"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in

which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: and, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and

supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." (Acts 1:1-14.)

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:1-8.)

The striking climax of our Lord's sojourn on earth, His tragic death, and astounding resurrection, and profound ascension, evidently made a profound impression upon Luke. And his vivid description in the first chapter is very explanatory if we read and think it through. For he says: *"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."* (Luke 1:1-4.) He follows with mention of the certainty of the things wherein instruction had

been given. Then Luke gives us a thrilling, gripping recounting, such as no other writer comes anywhere near in intense interest. And all this is written for our profit and good.

Although Luke had perfect understanding, there are many things he could have gotten only from Mary, the mother of Jesus, for she is the only living one who knew many of the things he has recorded. We are told that Mary had kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Doubtless, Luke had many long heart-searching talks with Jesus' mother. We can almost see the pained look in her loving, queenly face as she stretches forth her trembling white hands, and in a voice choking with emotion said to Luke, By all means write it down, and tell all future generations who may care to read about my precious Son, how He came, how loving and precious He was to all of us for thirty happy years. And, oh, why, oh, why did it all have to end in such terrible horror and tragedy? So many always wanting to KILL, KILL, KILL. Even to the point of slaying little innocent babes, that they might make sure to slay the only God-child of the world, who grew to manhood, living a perfect life, in service to the mankind of the world.

Jesus lost and found in the temple at Jerusalem is a very remarkable story. Not that other youths have not been lost; yea, many have been, and never found. Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem every year to the feast of the Passover. This was a Jewish custom, which would also prevent Jesus from going until He was twelve years of age. But He could and would ask questions of His parents on their return each year. Luke tells us that "*Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, filled with the Holy Spirit, and in favour with God and man.*" How much more that should apply to us today. We have not only Luke's testimony, but the entire New Testament, and millions since.

Luke 2:40 to 52: "*And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*" Three days' journey, sixty miles. Upon reaching the hilltops overlooking this renowned city, Jesus is awestricken; His breast heaves and recedes; His heart beats fast as He murmurs, "So this is Jerusalem!" Never before or since have any others entered that city with such a surge of soul as Jesus carried in His heart that night, and continued to carry throughout the entire seven days. There was a responsive chord, and it vibrated until it reached Heaven.

The sojourn came to an end; Jerusalem was attractive, but Nazareth and home also were attractive. It is worthy to love and attend the house of prayer—but it is more worthy to love and live the principles of Jesus in the home, amid the trying cares connected therewith. God established the home before the Church, and you and I are either home-makers or home-breakers. When the group started their trek homeward, Jesus tarried behind. Of course, Jesus' parents supposed that after a week's stay He would be ready and anxious to go home. Any ordinary boy would, but this was no ordinary boy. And they traveled a day before they found that out. And then they did the only sensible thing to do—went back to find Him.

Why did Luke write about this long after it had taken place? The child had been found, had lived His life. No harm had come to Him from it. Was it important? Yea, all the incidents in the life of Jesus are important, as are the events in the lives of all our youth, both here and hereafter. SO BEWARE! A child is lost; the cry arouses the community, the city, the State, the nation. All the forces of mankind are utilized to find those who are lost physically, but how about the millions of youths who are being lost spiritually day by day, and hour by hour? We act as if chance is the medium of control. Did Jesus lose His parents, or did they lose Him? Do we lose our children, or do they lose us? Solomon said: "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*" But for goodness' sake take yourself in on this, right where you rightly belong. Remember thy Creator in the days of your sons' and daughters' youth. Be godly parents to your children; then you won't lose them.

Do you realize that Joseph and Mary lost Jesus right in the Church, and that is where many of us do the same thing. The association of most of us laymen with the Church is

just an air of respectability, and not real loyalty. We may try to fool ourselves, and God Almighty, and our children; but we cannot do any of these things, for when our children discover our deception they are very likely to walk out of the Church, and never return to it. This supposing business is very dangerous and insecure. There is a vast difference in supposition and security. Joseph and Mary lost their boy for three days. Tragic enough! But how about us who lose them for a lifetime and eternity.

Mary had many an anxiety, many a fear, many a sorrow before this; but no sorrow like unto this sorrow had ever come to her. After three harrowing days of search they found Him; they searched everywhere but the right place. They found Him right where they had left Him, in the Temple. Greater credit is due Joseph and Mary than most people; they did not ask someone else to find their son, no, nor the school, nor the Church; they attended to it themselves, and the high light is that they found Him, and right where they had left Him. And when they did find Him they found Christ. You know if a lot of people would find their children they would find Christ spiritually, for most youths are lost spiritually.

Mary and Joseph were astonished when they found Jesus, but they were amazed when they received an answer to their query, because they found more of the Christ than the child. Jesus' three days' association with the wise men and learned doctors had discovered some things not known to Him before—that He was the Son of God, and not of Joseph. The wise men and the Holy Spirit led Him, and now He knew what His earthly parents had never told Him, and very likely much that they did not know.

Jesus was not rude to His mother. He did right there what He did ever after—He spake the truth, and all who heard Him were amazed, and they have been amazed ever

since, and will continue to be amazed until He comes again.

Immediately after this incident took place, Jesus set the marvelous example of all history to the youth of the world. Although He had discovered His Divine Sonship at twelve years of age, He then went back to His Nazareth home and submitted Himself to obedience of His earthly parents until He became thirty years of age, the custom of the time, and until the time of His divine mission here upon earth. There are many men who have striven to become gods, but only one God who ever sought to become man. The former have all failed, the latter gloriously succeeded. Jesus ever loved folks; they were more than mere things to Him, and that love increased until it took the whole world in.

Jesus' first recorded saying that we have, "*How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*", are words to conjure with; their height, depth, length and breadth cannot be fully comprehended, for God's business is our business, so ordered by Him; and, some time, somewhere, some way, we will all come to realize this very important issue.

The more we realize the magnitude of the sacrifice God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit have made for you and me, the greater becomes our inexcusable responsibility to God and mankind.

Jesus proposes a divine, eternal, spiritual, supreme objective for every human life: godlike, Christ-like, Holy Spirit Christians, for Heaven's glorious eternity. And as Joseph and Mary sought Jesus until they found Him, just so must we seek Him and find Him if we are ever to sit in His glorious holy Heaven throughout an everlasting eternity. He charted the way; it is for us to find and follow the lowly Nazarene to the end of the way, which is God's way.

Jesus said: "*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*"

III

THE TWO GREAT LAYMEN, JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS

JOHAN THE BAPTIST is the connecting link between the Old Testament dispensation and the New through Jesus Christ. Luke (called by Paul the physician, or should we say Doctor Luke?) is the only one of the four Gospel writers to give us a complete record of the Baptist's birth, and the same applies to the birth of Jesus. John the Baptist, like Jesus, came by way of prophecy and Heaven-direction. Angel messengers announced the supernatural coming of both. Also what their names should be, and the naming was carried out as per Divine order. The supernatural coming of John the Baptist is very nearly as striking in miracle interest as the coming of Jesus following. But we must ever keep in mind the one very important point of difference and distinction: JESUS' HUMAN TRINITY OF GOD'S HOLY GHOST DIVINITY.

The narrative by Dr. Luke, a layman, states that "He had perfect understanding of all things from the very first." The writing of the lives of these two great laymen is so gripping, thrilling, and soul-stirring that everyone should read from the beginning the glowing account of the several supernatural events.

Now if we seek to withhold the Divine element from all that is connected with John the Baptist we miss the mark set by Divine order. And if we in any manner attempt to separate Jesus from the human element, we then fail to

grasp the point and purpose of the coming of Jesus by prophecy, Divine order, and direction. When the people tried to make of John the Baptist a God-man, he said, "No, I am not. But I am the voice to declare His coming." When the people tried to make of Jesus the God-man, He said, "I am. But not to become the world God-King that you desire. *For my kingdom is not of this world.*"

John came as a man-child established in the Divinity of God.

Jesus came as a God-child established in the Divinity of man.

The angel Gabriel declared concerning John in Luke 1:5 to 19: "*There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and*

he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings." So the angel Gabriel here declares John as the connecting link between the old dispensation and the new, and directly connecting Jesus with both—the old and the new, and there is no break between the two, only an element of time, and that is never important where God alone is concerned. "*For a thousand years are as but a day in his sight.*"

If we follow through we find John linking up the old with the new, a continuous program of God's order and direction, which began in the days of King Herod (the great), who became an ingrate in the most diabolical fashion in world's history. All this began, however, with a priest named Zacharias, and the Scriptural recounting must be read to get the best possible reaction and impression of the thrill of content therein. The angel Gabriel came to Zacharias, the priest of God, to perform the supernatural in the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. But the angel Gabriel came to the Virgin Mary to perform the supernatural in the birth of Jesus the Son of God, making the human element on a par with the Divine.

The virgin motherhood of Jesus establishes the human element in making of Him a lay child, attesting to His laymanship. The Fatherhood of Jesus establishes Him as a

God-child and a God-man. Jesus never surrendered His association with the Trinity or the Godhead, but He did incarnate it in man, only temporarily. Jesus took His uncorrupted man-body up into Heaven with Him when He ascended up into Heaven, thus proving that man is made in the image of God, and Jesus retained the example of that image when He ascended. Jesus Himself vouched for the fact that He is the son of man, just as certainly as that He is the Son of God.

There is no record, hint, or suggestion that there ever was a conversion, or ordination of any kind, in the life of either John the Baptist, or Jesus. They belonged to no organization or man-made profession whatsoever at any time in their lives here upon this earth. Furthermore, John and Jesus, and every disciple and writer of the New Testament, were laymen. All these John and Jesus influenced and gathered around Jesus to found a new church-kingdom order which they did infallibly and gloriously establish and secure. Furthermore, this same group, Jesus leading, established and preached and taught and lived a different gospel from that which we laymen are living today. Now it is just since the depression that some of the leading Protestant church organizations have given the laymen a voice in the national and local conferences, so it may be the depression has done some good. Several of these same organizations have merged since the laymen got in. It may be the laymen had nothing to do in the way of influence, but one naturally would at least form some vague and indefinite idea that the laity unanimously supported the movement, for it is good business sense to do it.

Now, it is the height of folly to judge or criticize, but we can, if we will, take stock. When statistics show that it took over seventeen hundred churchmen to bring in one convert

last year, it would appear we laymen need to get into the church program in earnest and help the leaders of our organization of whatever name, for, after all, what is in a name of any church organization? Facts are facts, and results are results, and we surely cannot blame the depression for everything. We laymen have a very high standard to live up to in the example of John and Jesus and their loyal supporters, and we can all do much better than we are doing.

Again, let us get back to the text and the record of John and Jesus. Both John and Jesus lived close to nature, John out in the midst of it, and Jesus often referring to it. Both of these great laymen received the Holy Spirit from on high. Both began their preaching by saying, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" Each declared the other came in the fulfillment of prophecy, and both proclaimed the other as a messenger sent by God to establish a new Heavenly Church Kingdom here upon earth, which they did supernaturally and infallibly establish. John the Baptist was the first to preach Jesus. John's primitive figure and life were one to inspire the wildest nature lover's fancy. With long, raven black hair and uncut beard; with a camel's skin for a covering, girded about with a leathern girdle, he became a true son of the desert, with the dome of Heaven over him, and God's created sun in the Heaven burning His reality right down into John's immortal soul.

John would not be a popular present-day preacher, but he is the kind we need, for he would not make it any easier today than he did then. He would demand more than a mere formality of joining the Church for an air of respectability. John preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, and the crowds came, as they always have for this sort of preaching, for Jesus and His disciples and Paul. If the rank and file and about ninety per cent of our preachers and pro-

fessors and teachers could be jarred into a realization of the woeful lack of efficiency and results! It is not only a pitiful, but a tragic situation indeed. All too many members of the cloth have profession rather than confession, or possession foremost in mind, hence become unfit for the high calling and sacred task entrusted to them. But if we laymen could also realize that there are hundreds of members of us in the church to one minister, then have we not that many times more interests than our pastors? And God only knows how hard most of them try to do their best, while we sit in the grandstand, some of us shouting, some booing, and some not caring in the least what happens. But when illness or death comes stealing into our homes, then, oh, yes, then we want the minister, but we don't appreciate it. Little wonder we do not have better results.

Most of us laymen do too much kicking in the harness to ever help pull very much of a load; more of us wear out the hold-back straps of the harness more than anything else, and then some more of us try to kick the Gospel wagon all to pieces. It is rule or ruin with too many of us. We are just about the same no-good church members today as the throngs that went out to hear John in the desert. And he would scorch us now as he did them then, wherein he said, "*O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come,*" and he told them they better do something about it, and so had we, or else be respectable enough to go and ask our pastor to take our name off the church roll until we do some repenting and get right with God. We should ever remember He can get along without us, better than we will ever fare without Him. Human nature is ever the same, most of us caring little if our lives please Jesus Christ so long as we can be popular with the public or the many in the broad way of destruction.

John delivered the message he knew God wanted him to deliver, without fear or favor with men. He was more concerned to please Jesus than the worldly world. Jesus, likewise, delivered the message His Father God sent Him to deliver. And it would be far better if the ministry would deliver God-made messages today than so many man-made. Most of them act and preach as if they did not expect to have to give an account to God for the tragic failure so many of them are making of their ministry.

The D. L. Moody soul-saving kind of preaching does not appeal to them. Oh, no, the common, plain, blunt Gospel-type, soul-winning preaching of this greatest of all soul winners in this country is just too much like that which John and Jesus preached, and Paul too. Oh, yes, it was good then, but it is out of date now—not theological enough, got to have more present-day, practical, up-to-date theorizing to appeal to the figments and fancy of our churchgoers. Well, since when has the Christian salvation of Jesus Christ become a figment of fancy instead of a stern reality, the kind that takes seventeen hundred of us to bring a soul to Christ? And we laymen, since when did Jesus Christ release us from this soul-winning business? Just what kind of a record is going to be necessary for us to make the grade? John said for us to bring forth something to show that we are in earnest and determined to get right and stay right, and help others not so fortunate as we may be.

Oh, no, this soul-winning business is not alone the preachers' and ministers', for, in reality, it did not start that way, and unless you can find definite proof from Jesus Christ where and when He changed all this, both we laymen and ministers and all religious leaders, of whatever claim, not only had better get in line with John the Baptist's and Jesus' and Paul's way of serving God, but we had better get

the Holy Spirit, who helped John and Jesus and Paul, to help us do some very necessary things we ought to be doing but are not, to get some results we ought to but are not. Yes, and we had better heed some warnings for not doing that we are not now heeding, and this goes for all professing Christian laymen and ministers who are more of the professing than possessing kind. St. John said of Jesus:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

"John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son,

which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." (St. John 1:1-34.)

Such humility! We all need it and then more of it, until we,

like Jesus Himself, are willing to wash the disciples' feet in spirit and service for our precious Lord and Master. Oh, we had better all be doing something, for soon we will be dying, and then the judgment. And what a chance some of us are taking! In fact, with most of us it is all chance, but this is not only dangerous, but it is eternal suicide, for most of us do not even have a chance. We are not right and are making no determined effort to get right with God. So why should we think we have any chance, let alone any surety in the eternal judgment?

Jesus said for we laymen's benefit, in talking to the people about John: "*What went ye out into the wilderness for to see, a reed shaken with the wind?*" Could He have better described our present-day predicament; these same words surely apply, for we have been and are being shaken by every false wind that blows. We should all read the only recorded short sharp sermon of John of which character he doubtless preached many. He preached enough of this sort to have his head taken off as the first martyr of Jesus' new Church Kingdom. Well, John died a martyr for Jesus by the hand of a drunken adulterous king and his wife and daughter, because he chose to condemn evil. Judas died a martyr for Satan, by his own hand, because he chose to commit evil by his betrayal of Jesus. We, too, can take our choice. But you say, "I would never do what Judas did." Don't be too sure about that. Judas did not realize the enormity of his betrayal until he saw the results, and you and I will be right there some time, some way, somewhere. We, too, had better read, and heed, John and Jesus' commands and warnings now.

Doubtless, Zacharias the priest had John conform to all the Jewish customs, but, according to John's own words, he had never been baptized into the new church faith, for

there was no one of the new church to baptize him. So when Jesus came to John to be baptized it was very natural for him, knowing Jesus, who He was, and what He came for, to say, "*I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me.*" But John otherwise felt unworthy, he knew Jesus was sinless and pure and Holy. He also knew it would be a terrible humiliation to Jesus to submit to this, but note the words of Jesus: "*Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.*" Note carefully that Jesus said that it becometh us, taking John in on the necessity. And there is where every layman and all others come in. We have a part if we play it, or pray it, or pay it. It makes little difference what it is, just so we do it, and do it well, as John did it well.

John and Jesus finished their ministry before they were thirty-five years of age, or rather others finished it for them. John the Baptist became the first martyr in the building of Jesus' new church kingdom.

This brings us face to face with the fact that Satan makes devils out of women just as effectively as he does of men.

Satanic deception of mankind began with a woman, Mother Eve, and has continued with pitiful and tragic results, which both sacred and secular history profoundly attest: Pharaoh's wife versus Joseph; Delilah versus Samson; Jezebel versus Elijah; Salome and her mother versus John the Baptist. Women would never even think of doing such violent things but for the devilish influence of Satan. However, be it said to the everlasting credit of womanhood, no one of them ever opposed Jesus here upon earth.

Mark 6:14 to 30 vividly portrays the beheading of John the Baptist by the bedeviled perfidy of a woman.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

IV

JESUS' WILDERNESS TEMPTATION

THE terrible hatred of Satan toward God is outdone and outshone only by Jesus' infinite love and loyalty to Him in all things. The record plainly states that Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. We should all read the record, and ponder well the cunning of this great adversary of both God and mankind. His wreckage of humanity beggars description. This archfiend became a traitor to God in Heaven. Jesus, speaking of it, said: "*I beheld Satan as lightning fallen from heaven.*" Many times the Bible, and Jesus especially, warn us of this dangerous foe to all mankind. Satan's attack on Job ought to be read by every one of us; the diabolical deviltry of it all cannot be portrayed in words. It was even more despicable than on Jesus, for he had nothing especially to gain from it, but not so with Jesus—he had much to gain if he could overthrow Him. Ignorance is the devil's stronghold; it is hard to cope with anything we know little or nothing about; most of us easily fall for deceptions; we often act as if we really enjoy being deceived.

More people have stumbled over the question whether the spirit of God, or the evil spirit of Satan drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted than have profited by the glorious victory of Jesus over this demon. Most people try to delude themselves into believing that Satan and hell are not so terrible and realistic as portrayed by Jesus, when they may be much more tragic than we realize. And why

chance the negative, when the positive way to safety is infallibly offered and guaranteed by Jesus to all who will obey Him? Jesus, the infallible Son of God, recognized Satan and his legions of devils, and it is perilous for us not to do the same for time and eternity. Many religious orders and ministers and followers deny many things Jesus vouched for, but they never have outsmarted, nor will they ever be able to overcome, the Lord God Almighty in anything God has set His seal upon.

Jesus had a definite purpose in recounting this event to His disciples: He knew they would recount it to the world later, and what a gripping additional portrayal it would be if we had an accounting of all that took place while He was in the wilderness. The wild beasts were there, but angels also were there, and we can only ponder the realities. Jesus' adherence to Scripture is a gripping and marvelous example to all mankind. Satan must have known and realized this, for he, too, started this battle of wits by quoting Scripture. (And he is still doing it through legions of mankind.) Jesus was too weak to argue with Satan (so are we), but He found a correct answer in Scripture and won. (So can we.) Satan and his emissaries have ever been, and still are, good at reading hell out of the Bible, or should we say, into it? But we don't have to emulate him, nor follow his deluded advocates into the many pitfalls that line the pathway of all of us.

If Satan had left mankind alone in the beginning and for all time, this entire world would have grown into a Garden of Eden, but we must meet the issues of life as they are, for what they are, and battle it through—just as Jesus did and His loyal followers have been doing. We do not have to think up an excuse for doing wrong; the devil will help anyone who thinks he needs it, and will convince you that

you are wrong when you are right, and right when wrong, and make eternal fools of you in the doing of it. Hell will be a mighty lonesome and torturous place at best, for there won't be any children there, their eternal citizenship is in Heaven. Herod, who attempted to kill the child Jesus, will be in the bottomless pit, and don't forget there have been a lot of child-killers in this world and they, too, will be there, and if you want to know the worst, just read all that Jesus had to say about this very serious matter. Jesus severely denounced the devil in many ways, but the most outstanding was that "*he is a murderer.*" This ought to be sufficient to make all mankind determined to disassociate themselves from this tragic destroyer, especially since Jesus came to help us do this very thing by our allegiance to Him. Adam and Eve paid an awful price for one disobedience to God's commands. How can we ever hope to get by with a lifetime of this kind? Adam and Eve ended their perfection where Jesus eternally established His. They tried to compromise wisdom with wrong. Jesus refused to compromise right with wrong. Disobedience to God is delight to Satan. According to the record, Jesus only once fully opened the door to hell and gave us a portrayal of the inmates within.

Luke 16 records this tremendous incident. Every accountable human being should read and ponder it well, for it is so profoundly important. This rich man, secure, so he thought, in his great worldly possessions, at the gate of which someone laid a sick beggar to whom the dogs of the street came and tried to minister, but the rich man did not. Both died. The poor man went to Heaven, the rich man to hell. Now, the most striking thing is the rich man did not go to hell for something he did, but for something he neglected to do. The thing in itself might be termed very insignificant, but the spirit of the neglect is astounding and

terrible, but not any more so than millions are committing continually. This spirit of neglect is the main cause of the crowds going down the broad way to hell. The rich man did not go to hell for neglecting a lot of things, but just one that he could, and should, have helped. But he did not do it. Now, note one very important fact. He did not blame God, or Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, or anyone, or anything but himself, for he knew that he alone was guilty. Furthermore, he fully realized it was too late for him to do anything for himself, but he did that which should clear up a very important point for all time—he called upon Heaven's inhabitants for help, but was plainly told that sort of thing is impossible; then the next important thing was his asking to have those dear to him warned not to come into the same punishment he knew he must endure, and all others who meet the same fate. Jesus did all this poor rich man wanted done, warned all of us not to come into that same place, and Jesus sealed with His blood on Calvary every act of His life, also the words He spake. He could not have done more; He did not do less. Jesus said: "*No man can serve two masters.*" We had better read and heed so as to know who the other master is that Jesus often refers to.

The Book of Job very conclusively unmasks Satan as the heinous antagonist of mankind, as is exemplified by his foul and merciless attack upon the saintly Job. Satan's be-deviled hierarchy is spread throughout the world in an ever-increasing seduction and wreckage of humanity that is appalling, which is plainly evident by present world conditions.

Matthew 4 and Luke 4 both vividly portray the audacious attack of Satan upon Jesus at the particular time of his extreme physical weakness of his forty days' fasting in the wilderness. We should all seriously bear in mind that Satan

attacked Job and Jesus from a physical, mental, and spiritual standpoint. This momentous problem is one for wise, reasoning minds to conjure with. That mankind have a merciless fiendish foe to reckon with is a proven fact, by past and present infallible incidents.

Luke 22:31 to 35 records Jesus specially warning Peter to beware of Satan, who assures Jesus he is ready for anything, come what may. But convincing is the fact that he failed in his own strength, then became victorious by and through the Holy Spirit of God. Peter himself later warns all of us to beware of this enemy of God and mankind.

1st Peter 5:8, 9, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."*

Every writer of the New Testament charges us to resist Satan and his legions of emissaries. This fact should carry much weight, influencing us to accept the proffered help Jesus came to and did provide us with. Our supreme loyalty to God is not an ironclad guarantee against attack by Satan, but it is an infallible surety against defeat by him.

Apart from the power and protection of God, there is no such thing as an irresistible evil, but they are like unto stilettos—most damaging when they stab the heart.

Evil is universally used by Satan as a counterfeit of good. The devil's sugar-coated promises all turn out to be counterfeit in the pay-off. His evil deceptive potions have ever been destructive and deadly.

No man is ever right with himself until he becomes reconciled with the triune God. Jesus said, *"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

V

JESUS TURNS WATER INTO MIRACLE WINE

GOD's first act concerning the human family was to create man and woman and bring them together as home-makers and builders. The first family and home act of Jesus was to attend a wedding and perform His first recorded miracle, of necessity for the occasion, thus placing His seal and blessing upon the family and home. Jesus became the new spiritual bridegroom by this incident. His Church became the bride, the Holy Spirit became the servant, as we are to become servants of the bridegroom and Church bride, so as to be accepted by Him when He comes.

Pure manhood and womanhood cannot spring from impure homes, else the nation's people become impure and the nation is doomed, for this sort of people soon forget God, as is evidenced by the past, which is fraught with tragedy and destruction of nations and peoples.

Marriage is made by all too many a thing ridiculous; the comic opera jazz marriage is usually followed by the hiss of the serpent. Marriage to many becomes a mirage—something they thought they saw, but never reached, enraptured in a maudlin love which soon burns itself out on the desert wastes of life, leaving one or both victims to die oftentimes friendless and alone, where human buzzards are always waiting to pounce upon the helpless victims. We have warnings on every hand, but parents and youth go madly on, rushing over the precipice of time and destruction, from which bourne the traveler hardly ever returns.

Many religious leaders and organizations have sprung up with the sole purpose of giving an air of respectability to what the Bible calls common adultery, and they leave a slimy trail wherever they have appeared. First, the fallen angels direct satanic corruption, followed by the Bible flood of destruction. Then came promiscuity, polyandry, polygamy, monogamy, endogamy, concubinage, and many other devil- and man-made violations and pollutions, and we begin to say, United States, whither bound?

John the Baptist had previously said: "*Jesus is the bridegroom, and his church is the bride.*" So there had to be a wedding, and this marriage in Cana of Galilee is symbolic, and Jesus became the bridegroom and as such is supposed to furnish the wine, which He does in a very peculiar way. His mother makes a very profound command: "*Whatsoever he saith unto you do it.*" Just do it that is all, and they did it, and Jesus did it, and what results! Jesus performed this great miracle to convince the Church-bride present that He is truly the bridegroom, and all present believed Him to be that. He went down to Capernaum with His Church-bride; from there they went to Jerusalem to the feast. Mary, the mother of Jesus, according to the recorded words of St. John, only once had anything to do with any of the events of His earthly ministry; only the names of Jesus and His mother are mentioned in connection with this marriage in Cana of Galilee.

And the mother heart rose to divine heights, to make her illustrious son the bridegroom of the new Church-bride present for the occasion. This event started inauspiciously enough; there was wine, but as the demands of the new Church-bride grew, more wine was needed, and the mother naturally became concerned in the new Church-bride, so, all in all, she felt more than a passing interest, and virtually

commanded the new bridegroom to furnish more wine, which He did. And, again, what marvelous results. Now, the wine is the Holy Spirit, and it has never yet given out, or failed in sufficiency, and the best is saved until last. Later, Jesus talked many times about the bride and the bridegroom, who is coming some day to claim His bride. The most striking of references is the ten virgins, five wise and five foolish, who were unprepared. Are you and I in that class? Are we? Jesus said: *"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. . . . Be ye therefore ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."*

Most people make light of the Heaven Jesus came down to help us up into, but will make no preparation to go there. We barter and pawn the soul with Satan as if it were some trinket we can redeem any time we choose, but this is the very grave error Jesus came to prevent us from making.

Neglect is the devil's best order for our defeat. We presume and assume until we are consumed.

Jesus so glorified Heaven we want to go there, but are not determined. He so horrified Hell no one wants to go there, but we are not determined enough to escape going there.

Over fifty times the Holy Bible warns us to beware of Satan and the Hell he is responsible for, which awaits us who are presuming all too much on the mercy of God and not enough upon our loving obedience and loyalty to Him.

Jesus' mother said to the servants: *"Whatsoever he saith unto you do it."*

VI

JESUS ASSERTS HIS AUTHORITY BY CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

ST. JOHN 2:13 to 18: *"And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*

"Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" This was not new to Jesus; doubtless He had been there regularly for the past eighteen years as a worshiper and an onlooker. But the panorama of His life here took a decided change. The Church needed cleansing, and the world needed salvation, and the same are very much needed now, on a much more expansive scale. It is a mental impossibility for us to picture in our minds the enormity of the ghastly sight Jesus looked upon that day as He entered the Jerusalem Temple, which was supposed to be used only for the worship and honor and glory of God. But what a diabolical contrast!—oxen in the outer court, lowing and belowing; sheep bleating and milling about; doves cooing

and fluttering, all this coupled with all that would naturally go with this shocking custom which had sprung up from a corrupted and polluted religious leadership which had grown up through the years.

Doubtless, Jesus had witnessed this evil custom grow more diabolical as He came from Nazareth annually to the Passover feast. It is reasonable to believe that He had a feeling akin to that which prompted Abraham Lincoln to say of slavery, "If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I will hit it hard." And the chance did come to both of these great characters, and they did hit each of these respective evils hard. And may God hasten the day when Jesus shall hit still harder the forces of evil led by Satan and his legions, and remove them from the face of the earth.

Jesus did not need anyone to tell Him anything about this sacrilegious spectacle. He already knew, does today, and always will continue to know and condemn anything sacrilegious in God's house of prayer and worship. Jesus here acted promptly, spake only a few words, made a scourge to drive them out. (Later a scourge was used upon Him.) He threw out the men devils first, then the oxen and the sheep, and then He overthrew the tables of the money changers. Jesus' indignation rose until His divine dynamic action asserted itself in this bedlam of monstrosity, as echoes chorused throughout the corridors. Doubtless, hell seemed just beneath it all. Human beasts become the most despicable of any on earth. These are the ones Jesus had to drive out first (many need to be driven out now, for their number is legion); these are the devil-possessed kind that run true to form, and they are oftentimes the very religious kind; they are the ones John the Baptist and Jesus called vipers. He surely was correct, and His description well placed. Jesus later fittingly and more fully described

their many hypocrisies. Jesus said to those who sold the doves: "*Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.*" Someone may ask why did He not drive the doves out? You cannot drive doves without performing miracles, and they will obey God without being driven if they are left to follow their own God-given instincts.

Man is the only being in Jesus' earthly kingdom that refuses to obey Him, yet man is the only one that has anything to lose by disobeying. Still the unbelievably vast majority go right on doing it. Man created by God in His own image, but acting in the manner of a devil. Jesus did not condemn merchandising, neither did He condemn these men for doing it, but He did condemn them for desecrating God's house, and that goes double now, for we have more light and less excuse for such violations. Freedom of worship is a God-given right, and very commendable so long as it is not perverted to the point where it ceases to be freedom. The Pilgrim Fathers came to this continent to establish religious freedom, yet with an open Bible before them they established slavery, and it took a lot of war, death, and bloodshed to wipe it out. Oh, the devil travels equally well over sea and land, worming himself into every undertaking of mankind, even that of Jesus Himself. The condition Jesus found in the holy Temple of His Father was too much for even Jesus to withstand. Little wonder He became so righteously indignant. Jesus began His earthly revolution by driving more people out of the Church than He took in. The kind that many churches need today would not be very popular. Both Jesus and John the Baptist were treated mighty roughly and violently before it all ended.

From the day Jesus first cleansed the Temple dates the

beginning of the ever increasing bitterness and opposition of all the anti-Christian organizations existing then, and an incalculable number which have sprung up since. But the fact is that Jesus has outlived, outprayed, outloved, and outdied all other anti-Christian organizations and individuals ever pitted against Him. One of the first public acts of Jesus was this cleansing of the Temple, showing the importance of keeping vacillating, theoretical bedeviled influences out of all church procedure. Jesus, in the latter part of His ministry, duplicated this event by saying: "*My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.*" It is easy to corrupt religions, because they are so popular and universal. Jesus' true Christianity is the only counterbalancing influence.

Religions, religions, numberless religions, what spiritual crimes have been committed in thy name! Satanic religious addicts have been and are the scourge of Christianity; teaching, preaching and practicing every satanic quizzical doctrine and quackery bedeviled minds can imagine and propagate and in which they become expert. With them it is ever, "*Yea hath God said.*"

This is the satanic deception from the beginning. Bedeviled men have ever tried to outmaneuver God Almighty, but the present tragic pitiful condition of the world is proof to the contrary. Freedom and liberty are the two most abused principles humanity has ever been blessed with. They turned their backs on God who gave it to them, and have been doing it in favor of Satan, God's only mortal enemy.

"How long halt ye between two opinions?"

"The Lord he is God. Serve ye him."

VII

NICODEMUS AND JESUS

READ St. John 3 carefully, and heed it more earnestly. Nicodemus stood high by appointment of Roman authority. Many question why he came to Jesus by night; better to ask why did he come at all. Because he needed Jesus, the same as all of us need Him. He saw Jesus perform miracles, and very likely came by night because it was the only time he had to come. If Jesus was satisfied with his sincerity (and He was), why question? Nicodemus was a man of authority, yet he humbled himself, and addressed Jesus as his superior. Jesus met him half way, and gave to him in words the key of salvation to the kingdom of earth and Heaven as Jesus established it. Jesus recognized Nicodemus as an honest seeker after the truth, and highly honored him for it by confiding in him some of the most profound and supernatural truths He came to establish for the good of all mankind. Nicodemus credited Jesus with being a God-man. And he felt there was something that is beyond and above, which he had a heart hunger to find, and he chose the best way by coming direct to Jesus; in fact, it is the only way any can come to Him.

Socrates, one of the world's great thinkers and seekers for the truth, who lived four centuries before Jesus came, said: "My first great discovery is one's own gross, finite ignorance, in comparison with the all-knowing infinite wisdom of God, and as God wills, it is mine to obey." It can well be said of this man that he was a good man in his day,

for he lived in an evil time, in an evil city, among an evil people, and he cried out against the evils of Athens, and for this they compelled him to drink the hemlock and die a martyr. He made the same sacrifice that many others have made all down through the centuries. Paul cried out against this same wicked city of Athens in his day, saying of them: "*Ye are always running after some new thing.*" How much like unto us today! But that Athens is dead, destroyed, and the same fate awaits us if we do not read and heed Jesus Christ. St. John 3 is one of the, if not the, most scientific chapters in the Bible because it was written by the most profoundly scientific mind in history. If there is any such thing as science, Jesus created it, and the creator is always greater than the created. Before any man can become a scientist he must know some things. Jesus knew all things, making Him the greatest scientist that ever lived, for the best of the rest of them have never quite made this grade.

Spiritual things are not scientifically discerned by knowledge alone, and right here is where Nicodemus (like most of us) got into water too deep for him to wade scientifically. However, Jesus used a very scientific illustration in explaining the new spiritual birth. The air we breathe is all around us every day, and Jesus' explanation and application are so profound that even the great so-called scientists cannot fathom or reason them out, for there are many things we have to accept from God by faith and not by sheer intellect. Here is where so many so-called scientists expose their ignorance by talking out loud enough to be quoted in print. The Bible is the most scientific book in the world, because its authors were vastly superior to all others (regardless of how bitterly many have hated to admit it), many of whom have worn out their hammers upon this Superbook. But it

still stands. They have marred, and scarred, and the ringing of their hammers deceived many, and is still deceiving many more today, until they cannot think clearly nor discern wisely, and, in consequence, they have been led through the wide gate and down the broad way to destruction. Jesus said: "*He that trieth some other way is a thief and a robber.*" Not much chance for these making it into Heaven.

Jesus led Nicodemus step by step, which proves that the way into the Kingdom is more than a step. An eminent divine was once asked: "How long does it take to become a good Christian?" He said: "Why, bless your heart, it takes all your life." So it is more than a step; it is an eternal venture. Jesus did not ask Nicodemus to do anything He had not already done Himself. Jesus had been born of water and of the Spirit by John's baptism of Him in the Jordan. He had fulfilled all righteousness, and He requires us to do likewise, along with Nicodemus.

Jesus uses the wind as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. We breathe it, and it sustains our physical life from the time we are born. Without it we never live. Just so spiritually—without the Holy Spirit we are never remade alive spiritually. It takes very much hard thinking to reason these things through. To this we should give much careful thought and meditation and prayer. We cannot see, hear, taste, or smell the wind, but we can feel it. The same applies to the Holy Spirit. The wind goes where it pleases, so does the Holy Spirit. Wind is everlasting, so is the Holy Spirit. Wind is powerful, the Holy Spirit is all-powerful. The Bible states that when God created Adam, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Jesus makes it plain that man must be born again, anew. We have to be born physically to get into this world. Why, then, is it so strange that we must be born spiritually to

get into heaven? The first is possible with mankind. Why should not the second be more possible with God. The physical life is sustained by material things. Then why should not the spiritual life be saved and sustained by the infallible power of the spiritual. Reason teaches us that we stand or fall on these infallible, God-given principles.

God made Adam good by creation out of the dust of the ground, and He can make us good out of what is left of us if we will only let Him. Most people are striving to avoid the new-birth way into salvation, trying to find some easier way, and they find the easier way, but it is not the sure way, and, in fact, it is not the way at all. Many claim it is too old-fashioned. So is time old-fashioned; so is light old-fashioned; so is air old-fashioned. So are Heaven and earth, and all within and on them old-fashioned. And so is God old-fashioned, and we had better strive and determine to become Christlike to please God, if we ever expect Him to be pleased with us.

Truth is old-fashioned. Jesus said: "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*" Nicodemus asked a question that billions have asked all down through the centuries: "*How can these things be?*" Jesus' profound answer is: "*If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?*" Jesus placed His stamp on all earthly things as being a miracle. Man is a miracle, mostly failure; but that is no fault of his Creator and beginning. Jesus places wind and the Spirit as miracles, and on a par in their respective places.

St. John 3:16 is the epitome of the entire Bible and plan of free and full salvation. God formed a business partnership with this world through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Oh, the tragedy of the unrequited respect of man-

kind for this opportunity for an investment for eternity. Anyone who thinks he cannot afford to become a Christ-like Christian does not realize how wealthy a partner the Lord God Almighty is. Jesus Christ is the business manager for these three great partners. There would not be the ninety per cent business failures in the world that there are now if we would all properly place our investments with this infallible company. Most of us have vague and indefinite preconceived ideas, and try to fit Jesus Christ into our plans rather than to fit ourselves into His. The carnage of the world today can be traced right to the door of disobedience to God and His order.

Jesus has prepared a free ticket to Heaven for everyone who appreciates it enough to come and get it, but He is not going to force it upon us. Firms send out their best salesman to their constituents. God did that to this world, and no one has ever been too poor to acquire the pearl of great price. The widow gave two mites, and received the greatest compliment from Jesus that He ever gave to anyone for the amount she gave. There are so many sham religions in the world that it behooves us to discriminate between their way and the Jesus way, which is the only way.

There are many men seeking to accomplish some great thing, looking for some world to conquer, but they have not even conquered themselves, which is very necessary to success. Greatness is not in itself greatness, but goodness is always greatness, for which there is a good reward. Sham religions always begin with false leaders, and add the deceived to make up the organization. Most of them lay claim to the Divine source and inspiration and revelations. Oft-times the more blatant the hallucinations, the more successful they are in deceiving many, which they claim as proof

of their success. Like the heathen Chinese, when there is an eclipse of the sun or moon, they make a great powwow, with much noise, to keep the dragon from swallowing the sun or moon, and they can prove it works because it has never yet been swallowed.

Evils may be reconciled to the Church of Jesus Christ, but His Church cannot be reconciled to evil; for as soon as any church is lowered to the level of evil it ceases to be a true church of Jesus Christ. Nicodemus was slow in believing, but he lived the other side of the Cross, and did not have the light that we now have. The Bible record leads us to believe that he did believe in and accept Jesus later, for he contended for Him, and helped Joseph of Arimathea to take Jesus down from the Cross and bury Him. Doubtless, Jesus' disciples were present when Nicodemus came, and what he said then was for their benefit as well as it is for our benefit now. We have only touched the surface of all that is in St. John's third chapter. May God help us to read and heed and profit by the many profound truths contained therein, for it is very surely the most scientific and psychological spiritual chapter in the New Testament, if not the entire Bible, for the key verse is in it. John 3:16-17: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."*

Christianity could be built and completed on this chapter alone, if need be.

Believing in Jesus Christ the infallible Son of God is the perennial way to eternal salvation and God's Holy Heaven.

"That which is born of the spirit is spirit."

"So is every one that is born of the spirit."

VIII

JESUS DECLARES HIS MESSIAHSHIP TO A LAYWOMAN AT JACOB'S WELL

THIS is another profound and marvelous incident in the life of Jesus. When we get into one we think that is the more marvelous, and when we get into another we think that is the most profound, because all the incidents connected with Him are superb. Mankind has ever been mystified by the fact that Jesus chose to confide first to a woman His Messiahship and plan and purpose of salvation to the world. However, His selected disciples were surely present for this very important part of the conversation.

History records that no nation ever rose above the standard of its womanhood. Jesus knew and realized this as no one ever has before or since, hence He chose to begin where it was most needed and would do the most good. The immediate results proved that He made a wise choice. Nicodemus had just as good opportunity to capitulate to Christ's infallible truths and reasoning, but it took years for him and Jesus' disciples to grasp the same truth (which this woman understood in only a few minutes) and act favorably in accordance therewith. Nicodemus said: "*How can these things be?*" This woman said: "*I perceive.*" She not only perceived what Nicodemus did not, but she realized more than the disciples, who were with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, seeing the miracles He performed, and hearing the words He spoke to them and others, including Nicodemus.

Jesus has been criticized, rebuked, and condemned for this incident. This woman was a vile sinner, and she was so conscious of it that she came to this well at an hour she thought no one else would be there, or would see her. (I wonder how many of us go places with the same thought in mind.) But the person she least expected then was there, and is always there, and "everywhere adored." But this woman was conscious of her sins, and, doubtless, was sick of the whole life she was living, and wanted to be free, but did not know how, until Jesus came, as come He did, not only to her but to the whole world. But how much more quickly than we, did she accept Jesus' offer of salvation and freedom from her sins. But the thing that brought her special credit and renown is that she went immediately and helped others to do likewise. She brought the whole town, or city, to Jesus. Oh, what an example Jesus here gave to the world: it bulks so large, and is so practical that the act only speaks louder than the words that describe it. She was a great sinner, and needed a great savior, and so do we all. Paul says: "*We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.*"

Jesus asked of this woman a trifle, and in return gave her the pearl of great price. And in return for this she did that which brought her undying fame. The imaginary barriers of sin were all broken down by Jesus. There are none in the world that are insurmountable by Him.

Anything that is worth winning, is worth daring and struggling for, to keep and preserve. Our forefathers dared, and struggled, suffered terribly, even died for some worthwhile things which we value all too lightly. We can shout security so loud, that we fail to hear the explosions that blast to destruction our most sacred treasures. The most terrible event in our lives may be the means of saving our

souls. If salvation cannot come in any other manner, then a disaster which brings it becomes a most profitable event. Jesus said: "*He that loseth his life shall save it.*" According to the record, this woman was Jesus' first real convert, and she did more to bring souls to Jesus than anyone else did in the three years of His earthly ministry.

St. John 4 records this phenomenal incident of worth: ". . . Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: . . . There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. . . . Then saith the woman . . . How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? . . . Jesus . . . said . . . If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water . . . whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. . . . The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. . . . Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, . . . and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things."

JESUS THEN FIRST ASTOUNDINGLY DECLARES HIS MESSIAHSHIP TO THE WOMAN:

"Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."

IX

THE LAITY'S PROFOUND RESPONSIBILITY

WE laymen should realize that we can make or break any church, and by every law and rule of Divine order it is for us to make our Church what Jesus Christ told us it should be.

John the Baptist recommended Jesus to his laymen so that he influenced them to follow Him. Jesus' first question was, "*What seek ye? Where dwellest thou? Come and see. Follow Me.*"

The follow-me key is the success to every church. Jesus said: "*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them and that to bless.*" So two or three can make a church, and just as great as the one of thousands of souls. Jesus never measured quantity, but quality.

If we laymen were doing the things in the Church that we ought, we would not be doing so many things we ought not. The way the many are doing things is better than the way most of us are not doing anything. Doing right things right is the only panacea for not doing wrong. The ideal of anything is reached only by teaching and training our children and youth to do and be the living exponents of what they ought to be. This must begin in the home and the schools and the Church. And all the devils in hell cannot defeat such an order.

There is a sure and certain degree of success in Christianity in the world, because the stream of living water that

Jesus turned on from Heaven's fountain has never dried up, although it has been mightily hampered and hindered by evil-bedeveled means.

We need more laymen like Peter, James and John; Matthew and Mark, Paul and Timothy, Luther and Calvin, Wesley and Booth, Moody and Sankey, and countless millions who have prayed and payed and preached their hearts out for Jesus Christ.

If we would become just a small part as interested in our spiritual welfare as we are in every other phase of life's perpetuity, we could and would bring this old world to the Christ of God within a surprisingly short time.

Now the people are in reality the Church, and the Church is the people. Many are prone to say I cannot see that the Church does any good, and there are many who say I cannot see that the rain does any good. Because they do not have anything growing they are interested in watching it grow, but there is just about as much sense in one as the other, only that the spiritual is the more important of the two. You can die without water and go to Heaven, and you can die without Christ and go to hell.

The strength of our one and only true God is mightier than all the strength of the two billions of humanity on this earth combined. Ought not we give heed to some very important things He sent Jesus to call to our special attention?

Why should it be thought strange that so many nations have gone to destruction? Not one ever did unless the sins of humanity polluted and undermined it first. No powerful, ungodly, sinful, brutal nation ever lasted very long. God long ago issued a decree, "*That the Nation that forgets God shall be turned into hell.*" There are several well on the way in this old world right now.

How we laymen can be foolish enough to think we can go through life without accepting a reasonable responsibility for our part in doing our share of the allotted Christian service Jesus Christ apportioned to each of us individually, is hard to understand.

More of us are shirkers and slackers than workers and backers. Doubtless this has ever been the reason most people in the world join up with some man-made religion that they deceive themselves into believing will get them by in the broad, easy way of life.

There are two classes of Churches in the world that are pitiful to behold: those that are down and out, and those that are up and out. Jesus the more scathingly denounced the up and out, because they know better, while the poor down and out often do it the more ignorantly. Knowing and not doing is hypocrisy full-grown.

What kind of a sermon would Jesus preach to the average Church today? Well, He has already preached it and had it written down. "WHAT SEEK YE? COME AND SEE. FOLLOW ME." You may try to get around this eight-word sermon with excuses, but you will never get by with any reasonable reason, and had better not try it.

We smart under the restraint of the righteous principles of Jesus Christianity which the mighty preacher-layman Paul attested to in a thousand and more various ways. We want to have our own way, and now and always. We are headstrong and selfish. Most of us do not even want to share the crumbs of life with our unfortunate neighbors. Theirs is no concern of ours. Let them alone, and they better let us alone. Nothing short of death's peril disturbs us into any help or sympathy, but Jesus said: "*Inasmuch as ye did it . . .*" Ah, but to whom did we do it? We better have a care. Some day the account is to be balanced, and if

the crimson of the Cross is on the wrong side of the ledger, it will just be too bad for most of us, I fear.

There is a function of security for anyone within the fold of Christianity. There is only one organization in the world that has stood out universally and pre-eminently for this order. That is the Church.

The supremacy of the Church has not only been challenged all down through the mists of centuries, but it has been bitterly and damnably opposed by devils and evil people. Religious divisions have made war against each other, and religious wars between nations, and between Churches, and within Churches, between leaders and ministers and people within the same Church, while the world outside stood aloof and watched and mocked. Oh, the devil drives people hard when he gets them on the run. Humanity will kill religiously just as quickly as any other way when the devil gets full control, and he does that often, and he is right close up to and within many of our efforts today. A closer coherence with Jesus Christ and His Christian principles is our only salvation.

The most despicable war in the world is a religious war, for both sides have God on their side, to hear them tell it. Most of the thousands of religions of the world have been right and none of them wrong, so they said. Now it comes right down close home and we should face the hard, cold facts. Are any of ours right today, and are we anything else but wrong? The militant attitude of religionists has been deplorable, and is little if any better today than ever before.

A hypocrite professing he is a Christian is the most hell-condemned human being in existence—and that by Jesus Christ Himself. A lot of us laymen better quit our cussedness and get right with God, or get out of the Church and

have a grain of self-respect left when we come to die, for there won't be any argument afterwards. The order of things has never been changed since Jesus and His followers closed the books on earth and Jesus transferred them up into Heaven. We better not forget God Almighty is an infallible bookkeeper. We are all going to have a hard time to get by at best. Paul has warned us, a thousand times and in a thousand ways. We just better read and heed at least a few important things.

Prevention that prevents, and security that secures and endures must begin with the teaching, training and preaching in the home, schools and Churches. But how are we to teach right things until we get right personally? Well, it just doesn't make sense. The parents in the average home are woefully neglectful. The schools are more so, and the Churches most so.

What and how would Jesus have me teach and preach? Well, it is written down, and we better make it a God-fearing, heart-searching question to be settled right now for time and eternity. There is an accountability that all of us are going to have to stand for on our record at the judgment bar of God Almighty, and we better be doing some definite things about it. Jesus has made it plain enough for any wise, or even near-wise, people to understand. Jesus' words should stand out before us in letters of fire.

“FOLLOW ME.”

X

JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT

INTRODUCTION

JESUS' Sermon on the Mount is the criterion of all His earthly ministry. It is the quintessence charter of His new-church Christianity. Jesus is to this world such a magnanimous soul. Many men have risen to the full height and strength of their humanity, but Jesus rose to the full height and strength of His superior Divinity, proven so by His resurrection and ascension. If Jesus does not grow more and more attractive and real in our everyday life then we have never made the proper contact with Him. We show what we are by where we are and what we do. There is a law of gravitation in character the same as in nature. We are what we are because we choose to be. No one ever realizes the full value of study in any line in its beginning. It is the same with Jesus and Christianity—the final fruition is the eternal test.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount may rightly be termed the roots of the tree of Christianity. Jesus Himself is the body of that tree, and we who become Christians are the branches. If the tree bears any fruit it must be on the branches.

The certainty for aggressive righteousness was made so plain to all of us by Jesus and the Apostle Paul, by precept and example, that the exacting demands are accepted and adopted by the very few. But there are certain certainties

that must be adhered to if we ever reach the goal Jesus set up in His Sermon on the Mount. In this Jesus placed at the disposal of every human being a chart, a map, a plan, by which every one of us who determines so may become like unto the glorious life and attainments of Jesus Himself, for He said: "*And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" The spirit and the power of Jesus are still with us, ready and willing to help us become what we must be to fulfill the Sermon on the Mount requirements.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is the spiritual, superperfect, well-cut diamond, with its many facets; it shines equally well from any angle we approach the many superlatives contained therein.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is a minute analogy of everything pertaining to God and man. Jesus here sets forth His new-church doctrine and explains, interprets, and portrays all the rudiments of his new-church principles. And no man has any right to change or deviate from any particular of this doctrine or discipline.

It is not what we have and know that is of any particular credit to us, but what we give and do with what we have and know that Jesus commands and commends to our eternal credit. There are great heights of possibilities for every responsibility that is ever placed upon us; and there is that ever-present irresistible power of the Holy Spirit from on high to give us the help we need to win the prize and reward of inestimable value, glorious and eternal.

No accountable person is ever as good as he appears to be who is not a Christian, but everyone is better than he appears to be who is a true Christlike Christian. The power of the Holy Spirit is given only to those who properly use it to honor and glorify Jesus Christ. When the transcendent Jesus came, He brought something of Heaven with Him.

The Holy Ghost incarnated our Lord into a God human child of the Virgin Mary, at whose birth the angelic chorus from Heaven came also, announcing the birth of this mystical child of God and humanity in the dual rôle of growing into the God-man and man-God of time and eternity.

The mystery of the Divine laity of Jesus is no more than the mystery of His Deity. How Jesus can be a complete part of the Trinity of God, and also a perfect man is a mystery to man only; this constitutes an incarnation that baffles all human thinking and reasoning, but we can take it by faith and trust in the God who performed it and gave us infallible proof of it. Christianity is founded upon this correlation. Man can divide it only in the imaginations and machinations of the mind, but never in reality. The human element of Jesus is the infallible tie that binds humanity more closely to Him. Theory and supposition have no starting point, let alone a finality in the program of the Lord God Almighty.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." That is why God gave us a superior mind. Wisdom is wise thinking in action toward God.

Proper spiritual development of the mind, heart and soul must come from a personal contact with the power of the Holy Spirit, which alone is capable of performing that development.

Jesus came to be the channel through which this power of contact is made possible, and His Sermon on the Mount gloriously and infallibly points the way. Wise thinking prompts sound reasoning.

Jesus said: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

XI

JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MATTHEW 5

1. *"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set his disciples came unto him:*
2. *"And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,*
3. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Here Jesus brought the Kingdom of Heaven down to all present that day. Centuries before, Moses had gone up into Mount Sinai, where God brought something of the Kingdom down; but it was far short of Jesus coming in person to establish His Kingdom. The oracles of Moses were very different from the Beatitudes of Jesus. Moses became the leader of the Old Testament religion and the indirect representative of God. Jesus became the direct channel of the New Testament Christianity. Moses and the Old Testament religion are all symbolical of Jesus and the New Testament Christianity. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had entirely enslaved God's chosen people of Israel, so God sent Moses to deliver them by preaching and performance of miracles. The record of all this is nearly as interesting as Jesus' delivery many centuries later. When Moses had finished his work, God came and took him. Here again Moses is the symbol of Jesus, for God came and took Christ after He had finished all righteousness He came to fulfill. Moses appeared on earth with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, which

is infallible proof that Moses received resurrection like Christ's. These two great laymen had much in common with God the Father. He sent Moses into the wilderness for forty years to prepare him for his life's work. The spirit drove Jesus forty days into the wilderness in preparation. The devil indirectly tricked Moses into committing a rash act; but he appeared directly and openly to Jesus, because Jesus would recognize him either way. God thundered the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, so the people feared God and dared not go up, but said they would serve Him.

Jesus led His disciples and the people up into the Mount to hear His sermon of principles, precepts, and laws; and the people who did not go up that day missed something, the like of which has never been equaled before or since, and all we who fail to read and heed, miss everything eternally worth while.

The nation of Israel was inspired at Sinai by fear, but on the Mount of the Beatitudes the people were inspired by love. The message at Sinai was exclusive of all but Israel. Jesus' message on the Mount is inclusive of the whole world. His omniscience made Him mystifying to all preconceived religionists of His day. They could not comprehend the things He said and the acts of His ministry. He came to be the King of kings, and not a king of slaves, which most of them have been.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Jesus did not bless the poor in their poverty, but He did come to bless them out of their poor and unfortunate conditions. Blessed are the humble in humility of spirit. "God be merciful to me a sinner" is the publican and the correct attitude for all of us.

Jesus' first Beatitude makes free the poor in spirit, and gives to them the Kingdom of God and His Christ, which

is not only ideal but practical as well. He does not place the blessing on being poor, but the halo of splendor rests upon all who become poor in spirit.

Jesus is our best example of being poor in spirit, for no other character in this world has ever humbled himself as He did. He was justified in preaching what He did as He did, for it is what He practiced for our perfect example. The rich young man came to Jesus to inquire the way into the Kingdom. Jesus told him to go and spend until he became poor in spirit; but, he went away sorrowful, for he had great material possessions, and he did not want to pay the price, just as we do not want to pay the price; but this is the only way we can acquire stock in the Kingdom that pays dividends for all eternity.

*The unavoidably poor and sorely oppressed
Are the highly favored by Jesus and blessed.
His life on the Cross for all He has given,
That the poor too may enter the Kingdom of Heaven.*

4. *"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."*

Mourning is not the mere shedding of tears. All children do that, and grow stronger in the doing of it. Mourning is not the wail of those who get caught and arrested in their evil deeds. All these are affections of the mind and emotions which change easily. No one in this world ever mourned as did Jesus. He grieved, sorrowed, lamented. He poured out His life's blood in mourning for the whole world.

Joseph was a symbol of Christ. He was the apple of His Father's eye Jacob like Jesus also was the apple of His Father's eye. Both of these two great laymen were especially blessed and pronounced well pleasing to their respec-

tive fathers. Both were sold and betrayed by those closest to them into the hands and power of rulers under whom they both came to their deaths, after which they were both carried up, each in a different manner. Joseph became the savior of a nation. Jesus became the Savior of a world. The nation under whom Joseph came to his death was utterly destroyed, and the nation by whom Christ came to his death was also destroyed. There was great mourning in the passing of both, but they that mourned were comforted by the hope of delivery that came to them, and we, too, are comforted by the greater hope and promise of delivery and being reunited with our loved ones for whom we mourn, who have gone on before and await our coming. God forbid that we disappoint them.

For centuries God's chosen people mourned for delivery from the bondage into which, by their own act, they had sold themselves; but they were finally comforted when God sent Moses, who became another symbol of Christ, to deliver them by God's miraculous power. And for a time after delivery they were so comforted they sang praises unto God for His marvelous goodness. But when the going got hard, these same people longed for the fleshpots of Egypt, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic, and they were sometimes in and sometimes out of favor with God, usually under bondage and servitude to some other nation, as they were when Jesus came to deliver them. They yielded to Moses but not to Christ, for He did not come to suit them.

Romanism and hypocrisy reigned supreme when Jesus came, and into this maelstrom of unrighteousness Jesus opened the stream of righteousness from Heaven that has been steadily flowing through many channels to the uttermost parts of the earth. All this has successfully come to

pass in spite of the bitterest opposition conceivable in the mind and heart of man.

Legions of religions in the world have dominated and made bond servants of their subjects and followers. Jesus' Christianity never dominates men, but loves them into the Kingdom, and the more Christianity has spread throughout the world, the less any of these bogus religions have been able to dominate any of their subjects; so it is Christianity that has actually set men, and more especially women and children, free. Therefore, Christianity has leavened the whole world, just as Jesus prophesied it would while He was here upon earth. Jesus never propounded ideas and theories, but He did establish infallible facts.

Mourning and sorrow are like many other phases of human life which cannot be explained. They must be experienced to be understood. Jesus went through every one of these, yet without fault or failure.

Jesus Christ came to give us our greatest source of comfort by His assurance of a glorified reunion of all faithful followers.

Blessed are the mourners for the Christian dead, for they shall be eternally reunited in comfort and glory with Him. May every link in the chain be strong and remain unbroken, and may we be a link in that chain.

5. *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."*

We are often prone to repeat the old saying, "meek as Moses." He was not always so meek, yet he became very much so; but he did not always remain very much so. The Jew was not naturally very meek, but trials and tribulations usually make even proud people meek; and, the Jews got enough to make them the meekest people on earth, but such

never came to pass, for the Jews even today are still a proud people. Moses started out to gain a desired objective by killing a man. Not a very meek way of getting results, and certainly not anything like the way Jesus started out to get the desired results. But Moses' overt act cost him the privilege of royalty; he became a wanderer for forty years in the desert, a place which has proven to many a good schooling for becoming poor in spirit, mournful, and meek, all of which it did for Moses, and was worth more to him than the forty years he had spent in the house of royalty.

Moses became so meek that he came dangerously near to rejecting the command of God. This is not the kind of meekness Jesus placed His blessing upon. Moses was so humanly meek, like most of us, that he nearly missed being divinely blessed. Again, most of us are like Moses the sheep herder—we are more interested in counting up material things than we are in getting lost souls into the Kingdom. But when the burning bush set Moses on fire for God, he consented to go back to the task he ran away from forty years before, and God mightily honored him, even though he forgot his rightful position for the moment, making himself equal with God, when he said: "Must we fetch water out of the rock?" But here we find a gracious, loving God making a gracious loving forgiveness, and God gave him a greater honor in death than He ever gave him in life, as He does to every true Christian. Meekness is the melting pot of our lives for eternity. It is the gateway to perfection. It is not the great, titanic ocean liner crashing into the gigantic iceberg, but it is leaving the iceberg to float unmolested into more temperate areas which gradually subject it to a life-giving instead of a life-destroying monster. Meekness is the transformer of control. Meekness is not weak-

ness. Jesus certainly never could be accused of being weak, yet he became the meekest character of history.

Paul became poor in spirit, mourned, and became one of the meekest of men, yet he ever remained bold and fearless as a lion for God, as he ever faced the mobs and his many persecutors for the cause of Jesus Christ and his new church, by preaching the word in the dark, hard places, through the power of the Holy Spirit, which came so definitely and strikingly to Paul on that eventful trip to Damascus—this man Saul, like a roaring lion, breathing out threatenings and slaughter of the early Christians, when the powerful light of the Holy Spirit of God struck down and arrested him on his mad course. Thus the terrible Saul was changed to the meek and lowly Paul. The contrast here is refreshing, to say the least. Jesus' very own personal act of washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper is the greatest act of meekness in history. Hence, meekness is Christ-likeness. After Jesus had washed all the disciples' feet, He told them plainly why He did it: *"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."* Jesus had just washed Judas' feet, knowing he would betray Him to His death.

6. *"Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."*

This fourth Beatitude of Jesus should be more easily understood and appreciated than the three previous ones, for every one of us knows what it is to be hungry. Someone has said, "There is no royal road to learning." This may be true. But it is certainly true there is no royal road to righteousness. Christ did not come or go that way, and we have no right to even covet it, for Christ is our perfect example. There is only one way whereby we can reach the

height of righteousness and stay there, and that is to take Jesus with us. He is the motivating power for all good in this world.

"Blessed are they which do . . ." This is the only key that will unlock the door of salvation—which is the gateway to Heaven. Jesus put more philosophy in this one Beatitude than many other religions have put into a whole volume. *We have here a proviso, assured by a positive "for they shall be filled."* Note that Christ here makes a double requirement—hunger and thirst necessary.

It is almost impossible for us to be neutral and unbiased in our thinking when our personal interest is involved. We can suppress the soul until it shrivels and becomes insensitive to all the spiritual appeals of Jesus Christ. It may be we have already done this, and are sin- and soul-sick but do not realize it. Failure for most of us can be traced to one common error—neglect. Most of us know better than we do, and could and should know better than we know how to do. Wise men will sacrifice every material thing in life if necessary to gain spiritual immunity and eternal security.

7. *"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."*

This Beatitude brings us face to face with our neighbors, with God's X-ray turned on. Blessed are the merciful who merciful be. All too many of us covet the things we refuse to grant to others, taking a chance that God is so good He will have mercy whether we deserve it or not. No sensible person can help seeing this is unfair to both our neighbor and God. God pronounced judgment on Adam and Eve before they committed the sin of disobedience, but after they did it He immediately tempered justice with mercy. He did the same with Cain, for murder; with King David, for both

adultery and murder ; and the Old Testament has a continuous recounting of such incidents.

Our God is a God of justice, but He is also a God of mercy. Doubtless, one reason why so many great nations have struggled and gone down is because they came to the point where they had no mercy on the weaker, hence God exercised His command that "the nation that forgets God shall be turned unto hell."

Even God's chosen people, the Jews, as the nation of Israel have been destroyed, yet as a race they have been preserved. The second commandment of the New Testament Church, which Christ gave to us, is: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" We cannot do this without being merciful.

God molded and welded together two great religious chains—one for the Old Testament religion, the other for the New. There was not a weak link in either of them. To each of them a great anchor was attached. The first was an anchor of law which did not hold. The second was the anchor of love, and it has held safe and secure, thank God! Selfishness in the human machinery manufactures most of the miseries of this world. Man is threefold in nature—physical, mental, and spiritual. The mental and spiritual are the mediums through which the physical must be controlled, for good or ill.

8. "*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*"

He offered the grand prize of them all in this Beatitude; for, before we can be pure in heart, we must have a heart made pure by Christ Jesus, through which only are we permitted to pass into the sanctum of the holy of holies, and remain with God forevermore. Christ's leading and pleadings were always from doubt to certainty. He always

stated truths. Sometimes He had to explain, for the human mind is unable clearly to understand the deeper things of God.

It is possible for us to become pure in heart, but not generally probable. This is evidenced by the fact that few reach that high standard. But Jesus did not come to mock mankind. He came to make it easier and possible to become pure in heart. He never dazzled before our eyes an ideal or hope impossible, or even improbable to attain. Christ did not mock John the Baptist when He said: "*Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.*" He did not make a mockery of his temptation of Satan, whom He gloriously overcame. He did not mock the early disciples when He said: "*What seek ye?*" and "*Come and see.*" "*Follow me.*" "*Behold an Israelite, in whom is no guile.*" Jesus Christ paid Nathanael the highest compliment possible when He said of him: "*Behold an Israelite, in whom is no guile.*" Jesus did not mock His mother and the servants at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. He was not mocking when He drove the money changers out of the Temple and cleansed it. He did not mock Nicodemus when He told him that he must be born again, but He did His best to make it clear to him. He did not mock the unfortunate woman of poor circumstances, prevalent in her day, when He said to her at Jacob's well that He would give her the living water of life, and she gloriously believed, and she led many more to come to Christ. He did not mock the nobleman, or the impotent man, or the demoniac, or the man with the withered hand, or the leper, or the paralytic, or anyone else who made an honest approach to Him.

We allow all too many of our youths to be enticed into the slime pits of impurity and sin. Then, to save them, someone has to fish them out with the grappling hooks of

righteousness. But they will never be the same as when they left their innocent childhood for these things. Paul was redeemed, but the thorn ever remained in his life, and it does in the life of every broken sinner, for sin mars and scars, and they do not rub out so easily. Solomon said: *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* Jesus said there is a way to life and God, and that is the way of a pure heart, and Jesus told us very plainly that He is the way and the truth and the life. We can take it or leave it, as we choose. We can be humbly wise or we can be extremely foolish. We can heed Jesus' words of profound wisdom and advice, by which we shall be blessed and see God; or we can follow the multitudes in another way that seemeth right unto them and be lost.

Purity of heart is acquired only by the purifying processes prescribed by Jesus Christ. And this Beatitude is the taproot of our Christianity. It all becomes a very deep-seated personal matter between the tree (Jesus Christ) and ourselves as the root and the branch, the bud, the bloom; but, after all, it takes God Almighty to grow us as the apple of His eye before we are permitted to see Him. All new religions since Christ have started reformation in the head; but He established His in the hearts of all His true followers. These are His temples and cathedrals in which He loves to come and abide.

Jesus has placed His seal on a pure heart as being worth more to any of us than all the world has to offer combined. The prize offered is enduring and everlasting, and the only one of more than passing worth.

Impurity of heart makes a true conception of God impossible.

The gateway of the soul needs to be carefully guarded by

the shield and armor of Jesus Christ. We had better wear the one He has prepared for us. He paid an awful price for yours and mine. We surely needed it, else He would not have done all that was done for us. Can we afford to neglect or reject the proffered grand prize.

9. *"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."*

This group will be a select few, in a class by themselves.

Some people are in favor of peace at any price, or sacrifice. They say nothing because they see nothing. In contrast with this are so many people who see so many things that never did exist. Then there are the folks who do nothing because they are nothing, and nothing from nothing leaves exactly nothing. And there are more of this sort of people in the world than any other, for the conditions that are so objectionable existing then and now would not exist if we had the kind that do things for God. Jesus certainly did not mean that we should never oppose or cry out against evils that blight and wither, and damn the lives of all mankind. Verily, we should not stir up useless and unnecessary trouble from which no good can come, or, perhaps, the kind that does more harm than good. Jesus Himself told us that there are times when it is better to let the tares grow with the wheat until the proper time, and then destroy the tares. He said also that we as Christians are to be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves. Again, Jesus is our best example. When the forces of evil blocked the progress of Christ's Kingdom, He hit those things and He hit them hard.

May we follow Christ a little farther. When Jesus sent His disciples out to teach and preach, He said: *"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send*

peace, but a sword." Here again others want to belittle Christ, saying He sanctioned war, and again the interpretation is wrong. Christ is pointing to spiritual warfare. To substantiate this we refer to Peter cutting off the man's ear. Jesus healed the ear, then told Peter to put up his sword, for they that take it perish by it. In this case only of the three is the material emphasized.

Surely this Beatitude cannot be selected out of the group as the only one applied to material and not spiritual things. "Oh," someone says, "but it fits my sentiments that way," and here is the tragedy of too much of our so-called Christianity. We try to fit Christ to our sentiments, and not ourselves to Christ. We must first make ourselves spiritual peacemakers with Christ. Then only are we able to lead others into peacemaking fellowship with Christ, and be called children of God. We should never criticize others until we have been through something of the same fires they have had to go through. It takes fire to kindle fire, and it takes fuel to keep that fire burning. Jesus Christ came to kindle the spiritual fire of God's love for the whole world, and Christ sent the Holy Spirit to help us kindle and keep our spiritual fire burning. Love is greater than law, for law is force in the making. Everyone should so live as to be able to say to his neighbor: "My God should be thy God, and my Christ thy Christ, and we ought to go to God's Heaven together." The man who loves his Lord sincerely is bound to love all men more dearly.

10. *"Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Jesus again had become the perfect example of being persecuted for righteousness' sake, for He had already been

driven out of His home town and church in Nazareth when they tried to kill Him. None of us has yet received that proportion of persecution, as ours are mere trifles in comparison with His.

Persecution may come to us as a blessing in disguise. It did to the disciples of Jesus, for it sent them out to greater fields of service for God, and it steeled their souls till they were able to preach thousands of souls into the Kingdom in one day; and they, in turn, went everywhere preaching the Gospel as a result of this persecution. So righteousness means persecution, which means Heaven. Men are not persecuted so much because they are Christian, but because the men who persecute them are unchristian.

All Christlike Christians will have much to endure, else they are not Christlike. There is more profit in being criticized than in criticizing; therefore, criticize less and profit more. Every true American is proud to be a citizen of this country, then why not become a proud citizen of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, since it makes us a better citizen of both.

God will destroy every nation that seeks to destroy the things God stands for and has set His seal upon. He has done this before, and He will continue to do so, for the Bible tells us He will, and the truths will all be fulfilled. Nations which scoff at God are doomed. Time, the great leveler, is God's greatest weapon.

Nations, religions, and churches are so different that few if any of them can be entirely right. Jesus narrowed some things, He broadened others. He is going to take some people into Heaven, but He has warned us that He will have to keep many out. Will it be you? Will it be me? There are many things we know exist that we cannot ex-

plain, ourselves first of all. But the Lord knows all about us and loves us. Love is the greatest thing in the world, *"For God is love."*

11. *"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."*

12. *"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."*

Aggressive righteousness by a good man will stir up more revilings and persecutions from evil men than anything else in the world. Jesus foresaw all this and spake of it to forewarn us before it comes to us personally, so we will not be discouraged in the work of the Kingdom. Jesus knew well the revilings and persecutions that would come to Himself and to all His followers, and would have all manner of evil said against them falsely for His sake; and in the face of all this Jesus placed the cap sheaf on all His Beatitudes by saying: *"Rejoice and be exceeding glad."* What staggering logic is this, even coming as it did from the lips of Christ!

Are we to understand that John the Baptist is to rejoice and be exceeding glad, when that half-drunken, besotted King Herod ordered his head cut off because the daughter Herodias danced before him and turned his head? So we find here a drink of liquor and a dance made John the Baptist the first Christian martyr for Christ's Church. But Jesus did not say for us to rejoice and be exceeding glad to be crucified, nor did He conduct Himself in any such manner when He faced the last hours, and during His death struggle.

But history records many this side the Cross who sang glorious praises and shouted victoriously as they were cast

to the wild beasts in the arenas, and crucified in various ways for Jesus Christ. Even before the Cross we have Daniel and his three brethren, and many others, who rejoiced and were glad to stand for God; so, although Jesus did not put it this strong in words, it is possible, and has been done for righteousness' and Jesus' sake. The best things in this world are God-given and free to all. Men cannot humanize salvation, but salvation does humanize men. God, through Christ, established a Christian program for us that is infallible, correct, and perfect. Hypocrites only attempt to improve or supplant it.

13. *"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."*

The Beatitudes in the previous section might be termed the ten beautifiers of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus first said: *"Blessed are the . . ."*; second, *"Blessed are they . . ."*; third, *"Blessed are ye . . . for great is your reward in heaven."* In this He carries us to a climax, for this is the foundation structure of His Church, which He follows through by furnishing all the necessary building material which is to be used by every Christian to assist Christ in completion of the buidling of His Heavenly Kingdom here upon earth; and great is the reward to all the faithful in so doing.

Jesus places these ten great pillars under His Kingdom structure. The major portion of each of them is submerged, or hidden, but they are all strong and indestructible. *"And the gates of hell shall not prevail against them."*

It is the things we put into a piece of cloth that make it a flag of the nation we are proud to pledge our allegiance

to. Meaning something and standing for something, this applies to every human life. It will stand for just what we put into, and put out of it. And if we do not measure up to Jesus' standards we will do little, if any, good in the world, and will come to no good end.

(1) Many other religious leaders have led us to believe that negative goodness is the counterpart of positive righteousness, and is good enough. Such is decidedly not the truth, for Jesus practiced, lived and preached only positive righteousness, and that we are the salt of the earth; so, to avoid losing our seasoning power, and to be spared of being good for nothing, or cast out and trodden under foot, then we had better walk circumspectly, in obedience to His every command, which, in the final analysis, should be a pleasure. All too many of us hear and read the truth, but we do not heed. We are like those spoken of by the apostle and servant James, who says: "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves, else ye are like a man beholding his natural face in a glass, and then goeth his way, forgetting what manner of man he was.*" Let us all ask ourselves, Who am I? What am I? What kind of salt am I? Have I lost my savor, the respect of others, the respect of myself, and, most important of all, that of Christ? Have you taken stock and made a true estimate of your worth, your accomplishment in life, your record, if you please?

(2) But if the salt has lost his savor, how is it possible to do this? Through neglect, to lose it by doing something wrong, is pitiable, but to lose it doing nothing is tragic. If we don't do it who shall? And how shall it be done? Are we ungrateful enough to let Jesus carry the Cross and the load alone, and we go free? No, my laymen brethren, if you and I expect to go to Heaven alone, we are not going there at

all. We are only deceiving ourselves. All too many of us are content to be one-talent folks, while others determine to be five-talent, or ten-talent, and then to double and redouble as often as possible. Every man becomes the spiritual builder of his own life, selecting the materials out of which to build a palace or a hovel. Jesus defines you and me as, if and when we have lost our savor value, and are good for nothing. It is hard to become good for nothing—negative goodness, but if it were possible you would then have sheer nothingness. However, no human being can ever be classed as “nothing.” Christ did not do this, for He said: *“Thenceforth GOOD FOR NOTHING, but to be cast out, and trodden under.”* Even a doormat is good for something, but just to be cast out as nothing, not even good dirt, for people to walk over, is extremely pathetic to say the least. Let us, like Daniel, purpose in our hearts that we will not defile ourselves and lose our good salt savor for Jesus’ sake, and for our own more especially.

14. *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.*

15. *“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house.*

16. *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

Light must have been considered the most necessary thing in the creation, for *“the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good.”*

Light is the symbol of Jesus Christ; therefore, if we are

true Christians we are His light symbols. There is no such thing as an evil light. Nor does it ever depict evil—darkness does that. Jesus said: "*I am the light of the world.*" Light represents life, darkness depicts death. We must have the light of life before we can let it shine to light others.

When Jesus came into His earthly ministry, He found all existing religions were of darkness, fear, superstition and hypocrisy. Facing all this, He said, "I will build my church on the rock Christ Jesus, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And for this the religionists of that day wanted to, and did, kill Him. Jesus came as the light of righteousness, and He shone so brightly in His philosophy and logic that He literally ground their false doctrines to dust of the earth.

Jesus instructed us not to put our light under a bushel (where it will go out), but to keep our Gospel light trimmed and burning so it may shine before men to glorify our Heavenly Father. The only way to do this, as it should be done, is the Jesus way. Some of us have a light so small we could put it under a thimble. Regardless of the extent of our Gospel light, it cannot be seen under the dark vessel of worldliness so prevalent in the world of today.

The miner's lamp will go out as soon as it comes in contact with the black damp of the mine. Just so will the Christian's Gospel lamp go out as soon as it comes in contact with the devil's black damp of sin. There is, however, the safety Gospel lamp of Jesus Christ, who gave to us the oil of the Holy Spirit, by which we can keep our lamps burning and aglow for the glorification of God. "*Let your light so shine before men . . .*" God's "Lets" are powerful words. Nine times during the creation were they used, and every time supernatural things happened, either directly or

indirectly, for the good and benefit of mankind. No man ever gives enough to Jesus Christ until he has given his best, and we seldom ever, hardly ever, do that; but the one who does will never fully realize the fullness of the blessings they have earned. It will take all time and eternity for that, and that will be for a long, long, long time.

Light is a crown of God's glory upon all life. There is no substitute for the lights of God. Jesus Christ was and still is the light of lights. He can and will let His light shine through us to others if we will only LET. If our spiritual light becomes colored it is because our spiritual lives have become colored.

Jesus Christ whitens lives for His pure white light to shine through. God grant that it may be yours and mine.

The sun shines always equally bright, on clearest days or darkest night.

The only difference is where we are, that hinders our seeing the lights afar.

The lights of Christ are shining too, to light the way for me and you.

But if we miss the narrow gate, eternal darkness will be our fate.

No one to blame but you and me because we refuse the light to see,

Which God sent down from Heaven above, to show His light and prove His love.

My brother, sister, seek and find the One from Heaven who was so kind;

Who enacted such a spectacular rôle, in bringing salvation to save your soul.

17. *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."*

Jesus never destroyed anything good, but He did fulfill all righteousness and many prophecies and symbols of the Old Testament, verifying it as the inspired word of God by His personal acceptance and quotation many, many times, thereby assuring all fair-minded people that the Holy Bible is God's Book and the human family's rule and guide to eternal life. Jesus Christ did mightily change some things, but He always made them better in the turnover. He changed disrespect for women and little children to respect, and placed a halo of grandeur about them. He raised the rights of the poor and unfortunate to an equal standard with the highest of humankind, thereby giving to all mankind equal privilege to salvation and righteousness, and the right to a reward in Heaven greater than all this material world has to offer combined. Christ never did things by halves. He came all the way from Heaven (finished the task given Him to do), then went all the way back to Heaven to await the coming of every true follower of His.

The natural man is a great destructionist, but in doing so, many destroy themselves, and that is the very important thing Christ came to correct and prevent. Many have said Christ's new order failed to save humanity. How do they know what would have happened if Christ had not come? Man has already proven that he can, and did, sink below the level of the animal kingdom. And God has also proven that He can, and did, destroy from off the face of the earth (when they reached that stage in so living) every living thing that drew breath, except Noah, and all that came with him into the ark, which symbolizes Christ. Later, when men again began to multiply, and again became corrupt, God again destroyed such wicked cities as Sodom and

Gomorrah, and whole nations when there was scarcely any righteousness left in them. God destroyed Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea when they tried to follow Moses to recapture His chosen people. (Pharaoh and his army of persecutors symbolize Satan and his worldly persecutors, whom some day God will yet destroy.) And who dare say that if Christ had not come when He did, as He did, and accomplished what He did, that God would not have again destroyed man from the face of this earth? Oh, no, those who say Christ failed to save humanity are certainly in great error. Never for a moment has it been in any manner His fault.

Failure! Who is the failure? Man has proven the failure in everything he has ever attempted where God has been left out. Man has ever tried to bring God down to his level instead of letting God raise him up to Christ's high standard. We have no chance where God is left out.

18. *"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."*

Christ here puts the seal of high heaven and earth, combined, upon the authenticated Holy Bible as God's word and will, concerning the fixedness of Christ's purpose and plans for the salvation of a lost race of human beings who, of themselves, know not how to go out or come in. Truly, we do not understand it all, and we never will this side of Heaven. Our capacity for conception in all these matters is so limited. But is this an excuse, let alone a reason, for not using the light and privileges we have which Christ came and added to manyfold? Does not the tragedy of it all lie in our lack of real personal interest in all these profound things, and neglect properly to avail ourselves of the one

and only perfect and safe Book of Enlightenment, which the Christ declares, shall in no part pass away until all is fulfilled? There is no clearer, more definite, or profound declaration in all the channels of history than this one of Christ, which binds the Holy Bible to Christ's new Church, established by and upon Him in His righteousness, and to which all people are invited to take of the water of life freely. May God wake us up before the fatal day comes into our lives that our last chance and hope are gone, and that without remedy, forever.

The presumption of law is that a man will obey the laws that are made for him to obey, and especially is this true of laws that are for his own good and self-preservation. Many laws and decrees have been made by evil kings, potentates, rulers and lawmakers, but these evil laws, by evil men, for evil purposes, are not the laws Christ refers to. John the Baptist preached the servant's law of obedience to his master, and that he should be content with his wages. Christ follows this all the way through with the teaching and preaching for the obedience to law. But Christ is more interested in Divine law, all of which He helped to write, so is able best to interpret it, which He does so marvelously throughout the entire Sermon on the Mount. Let us go back to the first recorded law in all history. "*And the Lord God commanded the man; saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt surely die.*" Here we have the first of all laws that prohibits.

Note carefully that the penalty pronounced for violation is instantaneous, and the violator becomes his own self-executioner. This first law of God to man is THE CRITERION OF ALL LAW. No law ever declared or written by God or man

unequivocally prohibits. God created man a free-will agent, but not a free conscious agent. Man cannot violate his conscience with impunity. There are some laws that cannot be declared or written, yet they are fixed laws, permanent and everlasting. We cannot declare or write the law of time or space; neither can we write the law of love or obedience. There are many unwritten laws that must be obeyed by you and me.

19. *"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*

"Whosoever"—Christ here becomes universal, and inclusive, taking the whole world in. If we break one of the least we become a lawbreaker. Some of us may commit a greater sin in breaking the least of God's laws than others would in breaking the greater, for we have been taught better, and know better. Knowing is the basis for doing in God's scales, and it is our business to know, if we have at all the privilege of knowing. Christ weighs us in the balance and if we break the least, we automatically become the least. But whosoever shall do and teach the commandments he shall become the greatest. Many people contend there will be no difference between us in Heaven, but this contention is made by those who know their record is doubtful, and if it is doubtful it is deficient; and, if it is deficient it is dangerous for the safety of our own future welfare, and may tend to contaminate all those about us. To be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven will not be so comforting after all, for Christ will have our record before Him when we come

before the judgment bar of God, and we shall have to stand on that record before Him, face to face.

Daniel Webster, one of the greatest Christian lawyers and statesmen this continent ever produced, said and confirmed many things for God and the Holy Bible. His first and greatest is: "The greatest thought that ever entered my mind is the duty I owe to my God." His second is: "Our Republic cannot survive the loss of the American Sabbath." On many occasions he declared his belief in God and Christ and the Holy Ghost Bible. The greatest characters in the world are the ones who adhered the most strictly to all God's Christian principles in all things.

20. *"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

Now the scribes and Pharisees were just about the proudest heaven-goers the world has ever known, but Christ practically said they were not going there, and neither are we, unless some exceeding is done.

Paul says: *"The ministration of the righteous doth exceed in glory."* God said to Abram: *"Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."* When we Christians have God behind us with such marvelous exceeding, we surely ought to do some valiant exceeding for Him.

Christ said much about righteousness and the Kingdom of Heaven, for they are inseparable, as truly as Christ and His true Christian followers are inseparable, both now and through all eternity.

So far as the scribes and Pharisees being religious is concerned, they were the last word in it. They would not even wash their faces and hands on the sabbath day, or cook any food. Some would fast all that day. Oh, they were ex-

tremely all right, but Christ said that unless you exceed, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

What things should we exceed the scribes and Pharisees in? Christ has already given us a phenomenal start, if we only heed it. Poor, humble in spirit, mourn and be comforted. Meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness; be merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, having salt with savor; light where it can be seen, and keep it shining. Keep and teach the law of God, and be obedient to Him in all things. And if we do all these we will be doing a heap of exceeding.

Eminence in spirituality should be the incentive for everyone rather than the predominance in material things, which generally defeat us in the all-important things in life. Religious dyspeptics usually do a lot of spiritual slumming. It is far better for each of us to come to the end of this earthly life righteously poor in worldly things than unrighteously rich. Our time and talents are about all most of us have to give to Jesus, and most of us who have only this refuse to give any portion of them. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is Christian character in corrected action into living the example He lived; to conquer the world through all our faithful co-operation of all future generations.

*Begin the day like the birds with a song,
'Twill fit you, make you and keep you strong.
Then others will profit by the things you do,
But the greatest credit will come back to you.*

21. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment."

We can hear and accept God, as few have, or reject Him, as teeming millions have done and are doing, for they have

stopped their ears from hearing, and blinded their eyes from seeing, until billions gone in the past have slipped to the bottom in ignorance, superstition and degradation. And yet Paul says: "*For God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.*" And so every one of these lost souls are our brothers under Christ. Have we heard the cries of these lost souls in eternity? Will we recognize any of them as being there through our neglect in trying to save them?

There are many ways of killing people. Much of it is done by proxy, by unconcerned people who do not fully realize they are guilty, but anyone who votes to legalize that which unnecessarily results in killing is an accessory to the killing, whether it be considered a crime or not. We have heard the Bible woe pronounced for putting the cup to our neighbor's lips, but we voted overwhelmingly to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment in this country, and now unnecessary destruction and death ride the highways, and the law of averages makes two out of every three people who die as a result of drunken driving their own executioners, because they voted for this hell-born business on the promise of a bunch of rounders who said it would save and make for some of us a little money. Well, we see now that we, like Esau, sold our birthright for a mess of pottage, which has gone to the rounders; but we not only lost that but our decency and self-respect as well, and, more, disfavor with God Almighty. The pity of all this is the women of America, many of whom voted with the men for this thing. The Bible says no drunkard shall enter the Kingdom of God. We hear, yet hearing we hear not; we see, yet seeing we see not, all because we do not want to. We will want Christ to hear our plea at the judgment bar of God. We had better be safe than sorry.

22. *"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."*

God said to Cain: *"Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"* No, but he was his brother's killer, and Cain set a very dangerous and devilish precedent that the masses have chosen to follow ever since. Cain became wroth with God and took his spite out on Abel, who was in no manner to blame for any part of it, for we may be just as guilty and likely to come unto judgment for being angry with our brother without real cause, as Cain did in killing his.

Christ draws the plumb line very close up to us laymen. He has already told us that persecution for righteousness' sake is not a cause for us to become angry with our brothers. To revile us and say all manner of evil against us falsely is not sufficient. The fact is there are very, very few things justifying anger from a Christian, but we are all human and most of us very much so, and like to Paul, who says: *"The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."* Paul was terribly wrong in his part in stoning Stephen to death, but he was far less to be condemned for his conscientious mistake than Judas was for his betrayal of Jesus Christ.

There are some errors in our manner of life for which Christ has provided mercy and forgiveness. And there is probably no life record in history that is a better example than the contrasts in the life of Saul, the angry persecutor and murderer, who, under the powerful influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, made this same Saul into the flaming, sainted apostle of Jesus Christ, whose name was changed

by Christ Himself to Paul, who went out and preached Christ as no other ever has been able to proclaim Him, and we owe a debt to this man Paul, second only to Christ Himself, for he suffered even longer than Christ that we Gentiles might receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and a free and full salvation.

23. *"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee:*

24. *"Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."*

Giving gifts or money to ease our conscience for wrongdoing does not get us any credit with our Lord, make it right is the command, then the gift is acceptable. Right living should always precede the giving.

Our thought naturally turns to the poor widow, whom Jesus so highly complimented and praised her two mites as being a larger gift than all the rest put together had given; but she gave all she had, and they but little of their plenty, so the spirit of the gift is worth more than the amount which, of course, provides that the proper amount is included in the gift. Hence, the good will of your brother also enters in with great emphasis, and is to come before the gift. When we come right up face to face with God, we are very apt to remember the differences between ourselves and our neighbors. And that is something that keeps people out of the Kingdom. They do not want to make things right, but Christ sees all and knows all, and will judge all by His standard of weights and measure. We should remember that if we are part wrong we are all wrong, and should come all the way to make it right, and that early. Christ here tells us

to put the first thing first. The giver must always be greater than the gift, in the spiritual realm.

The writer's father once gave little sister a five-dollar gold piece, mistaking it for a penny, to give in Sunday school. The teacher of the class discovered it and sent sister back to correct it. But if it had gone through by mistake, or otherwise, my father would have had credit for giving a penny, and not five dollars. This is a homely illustration, but it is the sincerity of the sacrifice in giving that Christ weighs, and not the gift itself. Little sister did not own a penny, and she had only one way of getting it, that was from her father, and she gave it and she got credit in Heaven for the gift that she gave. Christ only can weigh and measure such things, and it is for us to make the heart-searching sacrifice in the gift. The world has much to offer, but no man ever got enough of it to satisfy him when he came to die. Every wise man chooses the royal highroad to Heaven for life's travels. A fully paid-up eternal life insurance policy is awaiting everyone who applies for it. The bank of Heaven is the guarantor; God is the president, Jesus Christ is the cashier, the Holy Spirit is the teller. The application blank you will have to fill in is the following: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

25. *"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison."*

26. *"Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out from thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."*

Putting it in the common parlance of our day, what reason is there in arguing with an adversary when there is no material or spiritual gain accomplished in the doing of it? We only make ourselves disagreeable and unpopular, so much so as to lose all influence, not only with our enemies, but our friends as well. An honest difference of opinion, and a sensible discussion of these differences is not what Christ here is referring to. A real adversary is not at all likely to have just an honest difference of opinion, he is more likely to be the type who would rather have you disagree with him than to agree. For he is not going to agree, regardless of what the subject is, or what the sense of justice might be. He is going to make a case against you, whether fair or false, for there have been, and still are times and places, wherein a man will be reviled and persecuted, even to the point of being delivered into the hands of the law for doing a good deed just as quickly as for doing a bad one, and the Christ Himself is the best proven example we have in history for the truth of this. He was perfect, all His doings were perfect, all His sayings were perfect. He died perfectly, He rose perfectly, He ascended into Heaven perfectly, and very few ever agreed with all this, so He spake here from a sorrowful experience that it is useless to disagree with an adversary.

Of course, Christ was speaking more especially to His selected disciples, who were to become with Him the founders of His Church, and as such He knew they were to have every scribe and Pharisee and Sadducee in all Jerusalem and its environment opposing them and Himself while He was to be with them. Also for all time thereafter. And as Christ said in the Beatitudes, to rejoice would be far more effective than to complain and try to escape the penalty, no matter how unjust or unfair it might be. Pay and

pay to the last farthing. Greater the reward in Heaven in so doing. Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises, and God shook the old jail doors open, and He has shaken this old world several times since. And we ought to be thankful that we have a God who is able to shake this old world at times, for it does let men know there is still a power far beyond that of man to consider and respect.

27. *"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

28. *"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."*

Christ is so divinely right in what has been made so humanly wrong that it did not remain within the realm of a few individuals, but rapidly spread to the masses, until within all but a few nations, past and present, it has become a disgrace to human civilization. Christ, ever unsparingly, hurled pebbles of truth, letting them hit who they might, and He let it be known that sin is sin, and immorality is unrighteous, and that adultery is revolting and repulsive, and that it blights, withers, and damns individuals and nations to their eternal destruction. And this one thing has been more indelibly written in sacred, as well as secular, history as the demoralizing factor which started nations on their downward course. Nations are judged in this world.

Now we are told in Genesis 6 that when men began to multiply, the wickedness of man became great, and all flesh corrupted his way on the earth, till God said He would destroy all flesh on all the face of the whole earth. But Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, so Noah and his family found favor with God.

Now God had told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and mul-

tiply and replenish the earth (which meant to put back what had previously been there), and in due time they began to do so, and this continued from generation to generation, so the sin was not in the multiplying but the way in which it was done.

29. *"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."*

30. *"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."*

Christ always brings us, gently but firmly, to the realization that it is going to cost us something to get into the Kingdom of Heaven, and those who are imbued with the idea that they can beat their way there are due for the surprise of their lives, for Heaven is not a bargain-counter basement for shelf-worn goods to be marked down for the penny-wise and pound-foolish masses who think they can deceive God Almighty, and slip in the side door, where good old St. Peter cannot see them. No, sir, we will have to walk right up the gangplank and show an up-to-date passport to get into Heaven.

Many people say one cannot help seeing. Yes, and these same people can see more through a keyhole than many others can see through an open door, especially the wrong things. And Christ commends a remedy for those who say, "I cannot help myself." It is a heavy price to pay, but we had better pay, for it is better to turn than to burn. When the limb on a bearing tree is no longer useful or helpful to the tree, we do not hesitate to cut it off. The tree is better

off without it, and if a certain member is going to destroy the body, we go to a hospital and pay a good big fee to have it cut off, rather than lose the whole body; and this is just what Christ is trying to tell us. Better submit to the severe operation, even to the extent of the loss of body and physical life itself, than to be cast into hell for all eternity.

Christ never placed much stress or value on the human body, but He ever stressed the sacrifice value of the body, or any other material thing in the world, in favor of saving the eternal soul. All too many people seem not to realize that the soul does not belong to the body, but the body to the soul, for a man does not belong to the house he and his family live in, but the house belongs to the man who lives in it. Now, this is even more applicable to both the body and the soul of man. God gives to every man his body. He builds no part of it himself. He has no part whatsoever in its beginning. He has little to do with its early fruition, and all of what he has he borrows from God, for the first thing a child has to have when born is air, and God's air. The mother could not have brought the child into the world without God's air. Who grows the food? God grows it. Who furnishes the rain, the sunlight? Whom does the earth belong to, anyway, and all that is in it, and on it? To God, and God alone. So our body is God's house we live in, and some day is to be transformed back to the earth from which man was originally created physically. Hence, we should use the body that God has given us to protect and save our soul, which God has given us, rather than so live as to destroy both soul and body in hell. Reckless risks for large stakes is the common bent of mankind, but we cannot overcome the inevitable. If we go counter to God's plans, failure is inevitable.

31. *"It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement :*

32. *"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commiteth adultery."*

When a Protestant church layman dare make bold enough to come out and condemn the divorce evil which has sprung up during this generation, and place the greatest responsibility for it where it rightfully belongs, he is bound to call down the criticism of some, the condemnation of others, and the wrath of others. After years of thought, unprejudiced consideration, we have to shamefully confess that upon the shoulders of the leading ministers, and a majority of the lesser men of the cloth, rests most of the blame for this custom growing by leaps and bounds, especially during the first part of this century, for the majority have consented to and voted for the privilege to be allowed to perform the marriage ceremony for divorced men and women, and the greater shame and pity of it all is that the love of the mighty dollar has been placed by them above the command of Christ.

The majority of ministers dare not cry out against this evil, and then practice the hypocrisy of performing the ceremony, so they, like Pilate, wash their hands in the worldly suds of Christ-condemned adultery, and go their way jingling the few paltry pieces of silver, by the sound of which they hope to drown whatever misgivings of conscience they might have had before they accepted their first bribe of the tribute money for performing the ceremony that Christ condemns. Furthermore, there is not a single one of these same ministers who, if Jesus Christ were here on earth in person, would invite Him to an adulterous mar-

riage ceremony which they were about to perform. They would be afraid the righteous indignation of Christ would assert itself to the extent of calling down the wrath of God upon it and them as well. No church is going to rise or remain any higher than its standard of morals, and as the minister is the leader, he naturally wields the greater influence, either for good or evil.

We have had, within the past decade, an example of a very high standing minister. His popularity was nationwide. An actor and an actress, both popular, who had each received a common-law divorce, came to him to be married. The announcement having been made previously, there was both nation-wide criticism and commendation of his performing the ceremony, which he did perform, after which he fairly shouted to the world that he got a large sum of money for doing it, and he was proud of it. The writer does not even want to pass opinion or judgment, but the strange part about this particular incident is that the couple have since been divorced, and both have been married again; and although the minister at that time was a leader of one of the largest churches in the United States, he now has no church of his own and has become a tramp minister. His high standing is gone, his self-respect is gone; for no prominent minister can for long smother his conscience and continue to succeed in the soul-winning business for Jesus Christ, who so plainly and definitely and positively condemns this sort of thing. The attitude and the present tendency of this country, and more especially of the churches, will have to change, and that right soon if we are to stem the tidal wave of immorality that is rolling on like a deluge within and over this fair, so-called Christian nation, of which we all ought to remain proud for all time to come for, if there is any one nation God has smiled upon more

than any other since it became a free nation under God, it is these United States of America.

The immortal Washington and his poor soldiers fought through the snow at Valley Forge, blood dripping from their bleeding feet, that this nation under God might become free. And when our nation was threatened with disruption and a break-down again, God raised up a great soul in Abraham Lincoln, who said, "This nation cannot remain half slave and half free." And again it took the blood of many of the best of the manhood of this nation to wipe out slavery and save the Union. Again we find many of the Protestant ministry of this nation standing up for slavery of the Negro race. Many more took no stand at all upon the issue, as many today are taking no stand on this present-day evil.

There is another group of powerful professional men who are fostering, aiding, and abetting this evil, purely from the standpoint of the money involved, in which they can realize attorney's fees, and at times to the extent of exorbitant amounts, which, in many cases, has become a sort of a racket, or graft, and many homes are unnecessarily broken up by the undue influence and advice of men of the law-making body. Later, Christ, in His earthly ministry, was surrounded by leading churchmen and lawyers, and we read:

"Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. . . .

"Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

Brethren, do not misunderstand ; we are not criticizing the ministerial or legal profession. On the contrary, we set up the claim that in the order named they are the two most potential, influential professions in the world. Hence, their opportunity for wielding a power for good is the greatest of all. However, this also holds for their power for evil. The ministerial body mightily influences the masses, and the law-making body creates the laws of man, by the influence and demand of the masses. Therefore, by far the greater burden of responsibility for the influence for righteousness of the masses rests upon the profession of the ministry, and these also have the greater responsibility for accounting to God, for they all claim they received the call from God to become the righteous leaders and advisers of the masses. May God burn down into our very souls our individual responsibility to him.

33. *"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths :*

34. *"But I say unto you, Swear not at all ; neither by heaven ; for it is God's throne :*

35. *"Nor by the earth ; for it is his footstool : neither by Jerusalem ; for it is the city of the great king.*

36. *"Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

37. *"But let your communication be Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."*

Christ condemned and broke down more racial, national and world-wide customs than any new religious leader that ever attempted to establish a new religion. But He never took away even a mere religious custom without putting something far better in its place. Christ at no time con-

demned the idea or ideal of men resolving to do better, but He did condemn the common practice of making words and oaths supplant the doing of good acts or deeds.

The weakness of man physically is one of his greatest assets, for he must accomplish worth-while things by the force of his intellect rather than by the physical method. However, man has used and abused both more for his downfall than for his uplift, and for his eternal loss than for his eternal benefit. Christ here is trying to make clear to us that the swearing of any oath does not necessarily imply the truth. If one man asks another to tell him the truth about a matter, and the reply is that the truth has been told him, the latter cannot make it any more the truth by saying, "I swear it is the truth, so help me God." The average person will believe a lie if it sounds like the truth more quickly than the truth if it sounds like a lie. But in all things, especially where a Christian principle is involved and there is a shadow of doubt, it is far better, if time permits, to carefully consider and weigh the matter, to determine by which method we can be sure we are right, then to act according to our more mature judgment.

Some people are always throwing rocks into the stream of truth, if for no other purpose but to stir up dirt that is underneath. Wisdom prompts us to get away and keep as far away from the cesspools of iniquity as possible.

Individuals, and the masses, have treated Christ's commands and laws with impunity, but the condemnation is upon individuals and nations alike, for such disregard. Jesus Christ condemned taking oaths of any kind whatsoever, saying: "*Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*" Our courts press this violation upon people, and it may be one

of the secrets of their corruption and of the disrespect for them that has steadily grown since they were established.

Jesus said, "*Swear not at all.*" But the courts of this land almost compel people to break Christ's commands every time they are in session. Oh, some ask what difference does it make. It doesn't amount to anything, anyway, and that is just about the general attitude taken by humanity toward the million or more man-made laws and the courts that execute them, and this leads to disrespect for all God's laws. The wrong things we do and the evils we commit poison our blood against God and righteousness. The world is polluted with every sort of wrong and evil conceivable in the mind and machinations of man. His natural bent is toward evil and disobedience to God. We conspire to prevent God from doing good, and thereby prevent men from becoming good.

38. "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*

39. "*But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

40. "*And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*

41. "*And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*

42. "*Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away.*"

Here Christ calls on every bit of Christian fortitude any man can hope to possess, and, in addition, to be so filled with the power of the Holy Spirit that all his human nature is excluded, for in no other way can he even hope to measure up to this requirement. To reach this whole-souled conse-

cration is difficult, yet possible, for Christ would not request it if it were impossible.

The old Mosaic law exacted an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but Christ came by precept and example to break down this custom and law, and to replace it with the law of love. The law of love cannot be written or defined. It must be lived, so Christ here puts every Christian to the very severest test whereby he can determine whether he be the very best Christian possible. Solomon said: "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*" Paul also gives us good advice: "*Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. . . . Recompense no man evil for evil. . . . Avenge not yourselves. . . . Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*" So we find the Christian standard is to return good for evil, which is extremely hard to do.

Genesis, which means the beginning of the race of mankind, and, O what a beginning, and what a race we have turned out to be, for we have made the devil our running mate, and he has kept close by our side, or right at our heels all the way. We invite him into our homes, our hearts, our lives. We indulge in his multiplicity of concoctions; we become addicts and slaves to his manifold divinations.

Jesus, from His Divine child beginning, preserved His Divinity. Satan remained a perverted devil, and Jesus brought this vile enemy of God and man out into our plain vision so perfectly that we need not be deceived. And Jesus warned us more against the devil and hell than He ever praised Himself and Heaven, for He plainly tells us that our eternal destiny rests upon the finality of our decision. There has been but one infallible authority on the eternal

destiny of mankind, and that is Jesus Christ. He told us all we need to know, and far more wisdom than any of us ever apply. Judas had personal contact with Jesus for over three years, and did know, but did not heed, just as we do not heed, as we know full well we ought.

Our outlook upon others is more often due to the fault of our own scope of vision. In attempting to match ourselves against many things, we often overmatch ourselves against ourselves. Our commotions are the result of our emotions. Co-ordination is more important than ordination. The first is God's order, the second is man-made and leads to subordination.

Most of us think we are always right, or never wrong.

We live as we live, and we die as we die, because we are what we are. It is so hard to get right and stay right that it is almost impossible, but that is the reason Jesus Christ did everything on this earth that He did to help us to do the hardest things, for which we are promised the greater rewards in eternity.

43. *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.*

44. *"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."*

Hard, very hard to do, but not impossible. The true Christian must do it. Jesus here brought His disciples and all His future followers to a climax in the repeal of several vital sayings and customs which men had woven into the order of conduct for worship and everyday life.

Love is the greatest existence, for God is love, and rightfully we belong to God, and it is only wrongfully and by our own choice that most people belong to Satan, and

whether we are helping or hindering is the vital issue. Love does not surmount everything, but it can and should overcome every necessary thing. Prayer is the only passkey that will gain us entrance to Heaven. It is the one thing that makes human probabilities Divine realities.

There are many things that come into the life of every human adult, that at times affect and impair best judgment and action, even to the extent of tragic results. The human mind is a subconscious machine, hard to control in its many abstractions of emotions and commotions in every phase of life. The soul is the spiritual dynamo which we must connect up with the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said this would guide us into all truth, and teach us how to inherit eternal life. God recognizes the soul of every human individual and has invited every one of us to become a personal member of His Heavenly family. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount contains some of the strict rules of conduct for each of us. We must do, be, and live as we ought if we expect to die and go to Heaven as we ought.

45. *"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."*

If we want to accomplish anything worth while, the less of the "maybe" we incur, the surer and better it is for us. To become children of the Heavenly Father we must comply with the means of adoption, and Christ has reinterpreted to us what we must do to become God's children, and placed His seal on the spiritualized conduct of Christians by illustrating the humanized blessings of our Father upon both the just and the unjust. It is as much as to say, "Now, if your Father in Heaven draws no lines of distinction in these temporal things, why should we in any way surmise

that God would expect less of us than He gives as the perfect exemplar?" If we want Christ to befriend us when we die, should we not sustain Him and His principles while we are living. Christ and Paul raise New-Testament Christianity high above Old-Testament religion, and Christ states why: "*For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*"

Christ here, in His summary, draws His lines of demarcation between the old religion and the new Christianity extremely fine. If our Christian religion is no better than the old one of the scribes, Sadducees, Pharisees, priests, etc., then why all this effort and sacrifice and suffering persecution? And what is the world outside going to think and say about it, if the lives of so-called Christians are no more than only love for love, and hate for hate, and good for good? There is no particular credit for doing this, for it is no more than others have been doing for centuries, and they have the same reward, as you will have. This is the anticlimax of unrighteousness versus the supreme climax of the righteousness Christ came to establish according to his Sermon on the Mount, as we reach the finale in the following: Christian love is the only sure tie that binds us to good in the world.

46. "*For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*"

47. "*And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*"

"*That ye may be,*" is the greatest legacy any human being can ever aspire to. To be children of our Heavenly Father is to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ. It is all so stupendous

and profound that we cannot realize the eternal import of it all in our lives.

God set His bow in the clouds as a seal of assurance to all mankind that rain and temporal needs are not the basis of withholding common blessings. The old saying, "Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today," is not always the best logic, for most of what each of us do every day of our lives had better never have been done at all.

At least eighty-five per cent of the people in the world make a failure of life. Then that much at least of the doing is wrong, so it were better if we did less, and not only did it better, but right, which brings success for the morrow and the eternal, which is far better than all else in the world.

48. *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

Perfection cannot be fully defined. Rightfully it must be divined. *"Be ye therefore perfect"* can be construed as a comparison command. Therefore ye are to be as perfect in your sphere, as God is in His. It makes a great difference how we interpret things, and where we place the emphasis. God is perfect, therefore do your best to be perfect. The change, the addition, or subtraction of a word can make a phenomenal difference. Perfection comes from a Divine affection of the heart. It is the hidden mainspring in the recess of every human breast. It is the citadel for the reflex of the eye, the ear and other senses, working through the brain. Christ has gone into detail in showing us that the mind and heart are influenced by the multiplicity of things in life. They come to us all some time, some way, somewhere, from every angle, in every manner, and to everyone, from the greatest to the least.

Progress cannot be made by standing still. However, ex-

treme caution is far better than excited valor. Saul of Tarsus was the excited, flaming firebrand of religious fervor for God, as he thought, but he was wrong, when he had every opportunity to get right. He could have known. He could have won in a sane, sensible Sermon-on-the-Mount way, as we, too, can in this way. We, too, can become as zealous for Christ as Paul did. However, so far as we know, none ever has, because we are not willing to pay the price.

There is no success like the success that succeeds. The true pathway to Heaven is still very rough, for not enough travel it to smooth it down.

Many of us are prone to chance almost any material thing, in a material way, before we chance material things in a spiritual way. God has surely proven that He is interested in our material blessings, or He would not have given us so many of them. But the combination is necessary for perfection.

Jesus did not say or mean that we were to be as perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect; but to be as perfect in our sphere as God is perfect in His. We are mortal men on a material earth. God is a spiritual God in a holy Heaven. How is it possible to become perfect? Start just as you are, but start. Don't dream about it all day and night long. Implore Christ's help honestly and earnestly, and He will help you to become what you ought to be, by correlating your heart soul and life into Jesus Christ.

XII

JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MATTHEW 6

1. *"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."*

If the second and third chapters of the Sermon on the Mount had never been printed, we poor weak human mortals would say Christ covered everything in the previous one. For Christ says more in a sentence than mortal man in a sermon, or writing a whole book. What man is there who would ever dare to say any one of these phrases, *"Blessed are,"* or *"Ye are the salt of the earth,"* or *"I am come to fulfill the law,"* or the five *"Ye have heard(s),"* or the supreme climax, *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"?* Christ, we laymen feel You have given us everything we need, and just about all we can stand. But when You say, *"Take heed,"* and *"Follow me,"* in faith and trust only can we follow. "HEED" is such a deep, wide, expansive word. We do not at first grasp the stupendous purport of its meaning until we very prayerfully follow Thee to the end of this sermon, by which Christians mount.

Let us write down what we discover. Who dare say I never give anything to be seen, or known to those about me? There are some, yea, many, whose gifts no one knows anything about, for they never give anything unto the Lord,

or to anyone or anything worth while. This business of giving is one of the hardest hurdles for Christians to get over. Many souls have started in the Christian way, but have lost out because they became prosperous in material things, and have robbed God, their country, State, city and church because they did not "*take* HEED."

How much are we supposed to give? First of all, there is no supposing about it. We owe God one-tenth, and we have not given anything when we have paid this. We have simply paid our honest debt to God. Now then, what we contribute above that we get credit for. Someone will ask, "If I give a tenth, have I fulfilled the requirement God commands?" The writer would say yes, but not the requirement Christ suggests.

God, in the religion of the Old Testament, commanded the least they should give. Christ, in the New Testament, is placing the prize and reward on the most we can and do give. Then, are we to understand that the man who gives the most, wins the highest prize and reward? Not a bit of it. Christ never measured values by quantity, but always by quality. Many were casting their contributions into the treasury when Christ was standing by, and the poor widow came and slipped in two mites, all she had in the world. Nobody saw it but Christ. But He called His disciples' attention to it, and said, "*She hath given more than they all combined.*" She can buy them all out in Heaven and have some left. A host of people are saying, "I just gave myself to the Lord, and I am not going to concern myself about all these things. Besides, I am not going to take any of it with me when I go." Well, brother, from a material valuation, you are worth no more, pound for pound, than the dirt of your farm, ranch, or small lot you own or live on, for that is all we are, and some human beings are very dirty

dirt at that. So far as leaving it all here when you go, you won't get any credit for that, for you used every cent for your own benefit and pleasure while you lived, and Christ says very plainly later, "*As the tree falls so shall it lie.*"

Oh, my brethren, the Bible is fairly littered with the benefits, advantages, profits, pleasures, and joys in giving not only the tithes, but giving for Christ's sake and for your own sake and for others who need your gifts, for Jesus said later: "*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*" Oh, can we not see that in giving to the poor and worthy in all things we are giving directly to Christ Himself? And if that is not enough to make us "*take HEED,*" then we need most of all to follow Christ through this Sermon on the Mount to get saved again, or we are eternally lost. The writer is right down there with the humblest of the humble, and pleading guilty, for he knows Christ's X-ray shows several defects and flaws and ailments, and maybe some spiritual diseases, but, through Christ, with you, I want to be right with God Almighty.

2. "*Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*"

Christ rings down the changes on hypocrisy. He does not here call anyone present a hypocrite. This came later, on several occasions; but He does here make it plain to His new followers that the time has come to make a distinction between the customs of the day and the pattern to be. Hypocrisy is mentioned and condemned in the Old Testament in no uncertain terms, but not in the same manner, and with the same interpretation that Christ put upon it

in the New. One hypocrite in a good church can do more harm than many good men can do good; and a few of them can all but destroy any church.

Why do evil men join a church. The reasons, doubtless, are various, but the main one is that there is some good left in them, and that is the urge to be with the better things of life. Practically all evil men know how to be better than they are, and this principle applies to both bad and good; for if a good man knows how to be better than he is, and does not strive and determine with all the power at his command, he, too, is a hypocrite, according to the Sermon on the Mount.

Christ here does not draw the inference that a gift given to be seen of men and receive glory from them does not do just as much good for the cause to which it is given. Neither does He condemn them for giving to be seen of men, but the hypocrisy comes in the pretense of giving to God when, in reality, they are giving to be seen of men. Christ here condemns the intent if the purpose of performing the act is wrong. However, it would be dangerous to say if the intent is right. It would make no difference how the act is performed.

Moses' intent may have been perfect, so far as his conscience was concerned, when he said, "*Must we fetch you water out of this rock?*" when he should have said, "Must God fetch water out of this rock for you?" or maybe he should have not said anything at all and simply have done what God commanded him to do. Talking is a poor substitute for action. Excuses are a poor alibi for reasoning, so Christ always brings out the importance of harmony in doing spiritual things in the proper material order. Good intentions may be defeated by mistaken operation.

The masses surely saw through the hypocrisy of this sort

of giving, but just like many evils of our day, it was hard to do anything about it. But the deceiver sooner or later will show his real purpose, and the fickle public will rise up and condemn him, and the golden treasure he expected to find at the end of his false rainbow will not materialize. And when the curtain comes down, the hypocrite in the church blames God for his failure, and oftentimes proceeds to shout it from the housetops. The writer can think of no suitable word to describe these numerous church pests, except to say they are the highest type of deceptionists for keeping near-good people from coming into the Kingdom.

3. *"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:*

4. *"That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."*

Christ having very pointedly shown us the negative, or wrong, way to give our gifts, turns to the positive, which may seem to us vague and confusing. For how can anyone give a gift with the right hand and the left hand not know it? The trouble here is not so difficult as at first it seems, for there are hosts of givers who, when they give with the right hand, have the left hand out and open to receive something in return. They do not come under the first condemnation for giving to be seen; but they do give with the expectation of getting a large measure of prosperity and success, and even as much as, or more, money than they give. This is nearly as much in error as the previous method of giving. We might put it this way: When we give for God we should not let our material counterpart know of the gift. We should even go farther than this in the giving: we should exclude our entire selves from being the giver. Then the greater will be the gift.

"That thine alms may be in secret." Intent! No man can give good gifts and continue to do so without its being found out, for the poor and needy will tell it, and the reward will be open enough, but the praise will come from the hearts of these and not lip praise only. Christ does not say "may reward thee openly," but "*shall*." The poor widow was rewarded openly by Christ for the two mites. Her name has gone down in the history of the past nineteen centuries as having given the greatest gift of all time. Someone may say that no one knows her name. Oh, you are mistaken. The highest tribunal in existence has that name written down in God's own handwriting, but what is in a name with God except the Name that is written above every name. Jesus Christ the righteous. God, our Heavenly Father, gave us all the greatest example possible. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* God here gave everything He had that was nearest and dearest to His heart, and He asks the same in return. If it was best for God to do this for us, it is within reason that it is best for us to do the same for God. The entire Bible is strewn with promises that if we give it shall be given to us in full measure, *"heaped up, shaken down, and running over."* Giving is the leaven in the meal, rising until it runs over, the receiver not being able to hold it. The interest on deposits in God's bank double, triple and quadruple very quickly, and give one that sense of security gained in no other way. One sure way to make a perfect gift to God is to give to someone who cannot possibly ever pay you back. Then you know in your own heart you are giving to God, and not to man, or to yourself in return.

Anyone who is right with Christ spiritually cannot be wrong materially. But anyone who is wrong spiritually is

bound to be wrong materially. The marvelous resources of Jesus are inexhaustible and unending. He extends every reasonable resource to every one of us who fully co-operates with Him in His Kingdom building and program.

How can we reasonably expect a just God to pity us in the end if we do not show proper sympathy and help to all those we should. We must give more than the penny crumbs if we ever expect to be counted. "*Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me.*" We had better read and heed what Jesus says about these essentials.

5. "*And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*"

In the almsgiving condemned. We have some semblance of excuse for doing it, but one is at a loss to find anything attractive for so doing sacred things, when there is no mercenary gain to be derived from it. However, Christ had watched this sacrilegious custom during the years of His youth and young manhood, and to His pure young soul it was an abominable thing, and now He has to cry out against it, letting the whole world know that His Church members' prayers are to be different from the heathenish practitioners who were then desecrating all that had been originally established as a high and holy tribute to God the Father and His Christ.

"*And when thou prayest . . .*" When do I pray? Make the question personal, for it is definitely so. Not when do you say prayers, but when do you really pray? When do you breathe? When do you see? When do you sleep? When do you quench your thirst? When do you eat? When do

you hear? Oh, you will say, "I do all these things at short intervals." But why? Because of necessity. But why is it that we apply this principle to all the material things of life and then take such an unreasonable attitude toward our spiritual necessity for the more important, yea, the most important things of life. Who gave you every good single blessed thing you have in life? God and Christ. God's glorious bounties surround us on every hand. Their profusion almost submerges us at times, and we poor deluded mortals go right on looking out and down when we should look up and begin to thank God.

How many of us really ever thanked God for creating us in His own image, in His likeness, giving us an intellectual capacity superior to that of all other creations upon this earth? But better still, we ought to not only thank Him for giving us a soul, but praise His Holy Name forever for it. Have we ever really thanked and praised Him for sending His only begotten Son to live as He did, do as He did, teach as He did? Yea, pray and preach as He did, and suffer and die on the Cross of Calvary as He did, to save that soul that He gave to us? Have we really thanked and praised Him for the resurrection of Christ from the dead, His ascension into Heaven, and for then sending the Holy Spirit down to this earth to lead, guide, guard, direct, and protect all who really pray to him? Prayer is not a natural but a supernatural attainment, because the soul is supernaturally created, and prayer is a response to the drawing of the soul to God by the power of the Holy Spirit, which, in turn, is sustained by the same. Everyone must be sufficient in praying to save his own soul. No one can do the particular part that you must do for yourself. Self-preservation has no place in your prayer life. It is one important barrier that must be entirely removed before we can make the proper

connection with God Almighty. You may be very hungry for food and sit and wish for it and starve to death, when, if you had stirred yourself to action, you could have easily gotten food. Prayer can not make contact with God if there is something that needs doing which we can do to clear the way. There must be no short circuit between us and Christ, and praying to be seen of men is one of these sure short circuits.

The hypocrite does not pray to God, he prays only to himself. He is like the men who offer subscriptions to their church or good organizations, or to some other worthy cause, but never pay them. They do it to be seen of men.

6. *"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."*

Again Christ is the best example of all time. He is not here asking anyone to do anything near the equal of what He did Himself. For before He began His earthly ministry He went up into the wilderness for forty days and nights for fasting, prayer, and worship, and to withstand temptation, and later, during His continued ministry, He went out alone and spent whole nights in prayer. If Jesus Christ needed to pray, how much more do we need to pray much. Oh, if we would become just a small part as earnest as the Christ did in all these things, we would have little trouble mastering the problem of prayer. Christ never taught anyone how to preach, but He did teach all of us how to pray, and what to pray for.

When the *Titanic* struck the great iceberg, in the greater ocean of life, over three thousand souls on board were enjoying jazz music, singing and listening to it, and dancing.

But when the crash of destiny came to all on board, why did they at once stop all jazz activities and start to play and sing, "Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly, while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high"? About half on board that indestructible ship (so men had said and thought) had to sing the second verse: "Hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past; safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last." Why is it that nearly all of us are so prone to neglect or even reject God until our frail bark of life is nearly overcome by the waves of life's stormy sea? Then, and not until then, do we cry mightily unto God to help us in our hour of dire distress.

"*Take HEED.*" But the captain of the *Titanic* did not take the warning when it was given to him. The captain was fairly warned, and rewarned: there were great icebergs afloat in the waters through which he was sailing with over three thousand precious souls on board, who had been entrusted to his care and protection, to be delivered after the voyage safely into harbor. But he not only neglected to heed the warnings, but rejected them altogether. He took a foolish chance and lost that fateful night in the depths of the cold icy waters nearly two thousand souls. But we hope none of them is lost for eternity.

Men of many generations have read and made light of the people for attempting to build the tower of Babel to reach to Heaven; but were they so much more foolish in their way than we of today are? The builders and operator of the *Titanic* depended on an irresistible force to cross nature's great ocean of life, but their careless venture not only proved very foolish but extremely tragic in the end.

Man was created to conform to God's powers, and to cooperate with everything Jesus Christ has commanded him to do. We can go counter to God Almighty just so far, and

the harder we strive in this, the more tragic the results. History is littered with the wreckage of man's opposition to God's creations, and he is more diabolical in it today than ever before. Practically every nation in the world is praying God to make it victorious over some other, and some over all others. The day may not be far distant when the God of flood and fire and brimstone will take absolute charge and control of world affairs. We pray that His Kingdom may come and that His will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven, and that right soon. Who knows? Now, if it is coming soon, and we knew it, we surely would all be doing a lot more praying than we are. And we would do more than just say prayers. We would be like those on board the *Titanic*. When they realized their shipwrecked condition, they really prayed.

There is a vast difference between our living life prayers and our dying death prayers, both for our loved ones and ourselves. Jesus Christ surely exhausted everything at His command to impress us with the seriousness of every human life, and our proper relations to God in preparation for an inevitable death. Jesus' command for proper praying is our only chance for escape from spiritual death, which He so infallibly pointed out to us by precept and example.

"Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die? saith the Lord."

We can choose, but safety prompts us to turn before it is too late.

7. *"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."*

8. *"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."*

Have you really checked and rechecked on your habits of prayer? Some will say they do not believe in making prayer a habit, but you had better make a habit of prayer, for if you do not, you won't pray much, and soon not at all within the measures of Christ's prayer standards.

Christ does not here condemn repetition prayer in secret. Neither does He commend it, but He does rebuke anyone for repetition, or any other kind of prayer in public, to be seen and heard for the satisfaction of those who offer it. In other words, *we are not to preach prayers*.

Again Christ set the perfect example; for He prayed audibly very few times in public, and invariably before only the chosen few present. "*Vain repetition*." It is the intent and the wrong method that make the repetition of anything vain. It is pitifully sad but true that we have more vain religious organizations and churches than true Christlike ones, and we have more vain individual churchmen in all churches than true. And most of those who are not vain are vainglorious, while vaingloriously seeking more vain-glory. Is it any wonder Christ cries out: "*Take heed when thou prayest and doest all things*." Christ draws fine the distinction, "*Be not ye therefore like unto them*"—the heathens. We are not to be anything like them. The Father knows the things we need, without asking. But Christ does not mean that we should not, or need not, ask God for needed things in the proper way. All of us are willing to tell God some things, but we had better tell Him everything. There are many things Christ tells us to talk to God about, which we are not supposed to talk to men about, simply because it is none of their business. And God Almighty does not countenance our bringing others into His and our private business. Everyone abhors a tale-bearer, one who tells all his family secrets, and those of his neighbors, not

of his friends, for he has no friends. Just so does God abhor our saying and doing things to be heard and seen of men. We become one of the tale-bearing hypocrites of some church, and we just talk ourselves out of the Kingdom of God into the pit of hell. The Bible tells us to talk and walk circumspectly; if we can do this in the society of our fellow men we can do it for God, and if we cannot do it for God we cannot do it for society. There is no double standard of common decency.

How, when and where should vital prayer life begin between the Lord God and us? With the secrecy of the unborn child within the sacred confines of the hearts of the parents of that child, for you are helping God to create a human life into which at birth He breathes into that frail weak little human body the life of a living soul. And, mark you, the parents of that child are drawn closer to the Lord God at that particular time than at any other in the child's life, unless death comes to separate them from their blessed expectation and hope. Many people say there is no sorrow like unto the sorrow of losing the child of your fondest hopes and dreams in death. Oh, yes, there is, and that is to see them grow up and go into open sin and shame, never to repent and be forever lost throughout a Godless eternity. Better a thousand times for you to have given over in the flower of their purity and innocence, to be forever with a Christ who loved children as no mother ever loved them. Christ did not die to save children. He did not have to do that, for all they who have died in their purity and innocence have gone home to Heaven to be with the One who did more for them than all the kings and queens of all the nations before and since.

It is hard to conceive of parents who have one of these little ones in Heaven, waiting there to receive them with

the same cooing and prattle and smiles and laughter as of yore, who does not rejoice, and yet many continue to feed themselves on the husks of the world, which bring little pleasure, and which at best are only a sop in comparison with Christ and righteousness. Some very simple, humble prayers have brought wonderful results. It is better to bow to God in prayer than to have to bow in shame.

Praying for everything in general, and nothing in particular is not true prayer. The child says, "Mamma, I am hungry," but goes right on playing and gets no response. But finally she says, "Mamma, I really am hungry," leaves play and gets immediate response. It is the same with us. Earnest prayer gets results. Jesus is our best example of prayer. If He needed to pray as He did, we very surely need to pray better than we do.

Daniel was the greatest example of prayer need before Christ came. He prayed himself into the lions' den, then prayed himself out, to receive greater honor from God and man than ever before. *Praying to God during our lives' progression is far better than during its recession. The latter may be too sudden for an eternal adjustment.*

Jesus knows what is best for us, and we know better than we do.

9. *"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."*

If Christ had not asked of us to pray this prayer, many of us would feel as if it were too personally sacred and high and holy for us to repeat. But let us note carefully how marvelously the Bible record shows that Christ came, was protected, was led, and then did lead in establishing his new laymen's church. The first time Jesus ever mentioned

God in connection with Himself personally was when He spake to Joseph and Mary in the Temple. "*Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*" He started by calling God, "*My Father.*"

The next incident is Jesus' temptation in the wilderness by Satan. He places Himself as the Lord by saying, "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*" Cleansing the Temple, He said: "*Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.*" To the woman at Jacob's well: "*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*" God, then, with Christ, continues to be the Father until the Sermon on the Mount, when Christ says, "*Your Father,*" then, "*Thy Father.*" And now He lifts all his new-church disciples and followers to the sublime degree of equality with Himself in this particular recognition, that God is our Father, and He, Christ, is our brother, and if we were to express ourselves in everyday parlance, we would say, "My, what a break." Yet how astounding is our lack of appreciation.

What is prayer? Christ, up to this point, has given us a better definition what it is not. Prayer and love are two things which cannot be defined. THEY MUST BE EXPERIENCED. Christ gave us the very best definition when He said: "*Pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,*" and if we add anything to this meaning of prayer it must come of experience. Paul makes our adoption by God through Christ a brilliant success. But ever keep in mind that Christ made this possible long before Paul even thought about it. Paul just wrote it down for Christ later—Galatians 4:4: "*But when the fulness of the time was come,*

God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Jesus' human element is here attested by Paul. Jesus Himself attested to His dual personality many times: God-man, man-God; correlation of Deity and the Divine laymanship of Jesus acting as a man, speaking as a God that He is. Jesus spake of Himself more often as the Son of man than He did as the Son of God. For His purpose in coming was to correlate Himself into man that He might more surely correlate mankind through Himself into God spiritually. 1st John. All of which we should read, but more especially the third chapter which describes us Christians as the sons of God through Jesus Christ. This John, the beloved disciple, was with Jesus during His entire ministry, and until He ascended, so John knew whereof he spake. Christ prescribes the manner by which we can become brothers in Christ (not brothers of Christ), becoming sons of God by adoption.

When parents become father and mother of a child, they also become the acme of perfection to that child, and if the right relation of humble righteousness to God the Lord is sustained, that child will always retain the rightful high adoration and respect due the parents. But when children reach the age of accountability and find you have deceived them, there is grave danger they will condemn your soul into a Christless grave and a lost eternity, into which all may go. Christ came to reinterpret your spiritual responsibility to yourself and your children, and your children's children, as high above temporal things as the heavens are high above the earth. Christ very seldom mentioned the principle or place of material things, for He knew that if righteousness reigned in the heart and life of the individual,

it is implied that all these material things would be taken care of by natural order.

Many wise people have proven the omnipotence of true prayer. Many so-called scientists have skeptically made light of the claim that God could hear the petitions of prayer, but since the wireless and radio, over which a whisper can be heard, the overwise scientists are completely silenced.

"Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." The Bible attributes these words to God Almighty.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray the Lord's or disciples' prayer, which was good for them then, but better for us now, for we should know better now than they did then. Praying the Lord's prayer, *"Our Father,"* implies that there are others just as good and favored as we are.

"Which art in heaven." This proves there is a Heaven.

"Hallowed be thy name." Honoring His name before others.

10. *"Thy kingdom come."* Proof that His Kingdom is coming.

"Thy will be done." Proof that it will be done.

"Give us our daily bread." We are to pray for our daily needs. We had better pray for needed daily spiritual bread as well.

11. *"Give us this day our daily bread."*

Many say this does not mean temporal bread for our temporal bodies. Others are just as emphatic in saying that it does. Either may be correct, and it may mean both. If it does, all should be satisfied. But if we make it all for the

temporal, we are very likely to be in error, for if this one sentence of the Lord's prayer applies to the temporal, it is the only one. Reason teaches us to include both, each in its proper time and place. Read John 6: 35 to 71. Jesus here explains this bread subject, in which He plainly states, "*I am the bread of life.*" Jesus mentions the fact that they did eat the Heavenly manna in the wilderness, but are dead, and that we should eat of the Heavenly bread which sustains eternally. Jesus did miraculously feed the multitudes with the loaves and fishes, but He also condemned those who followed Him just to be fed this same temporal bread.

God provided temporal supply for man's every temporal need when He created this world, and any deviation is the fault of man and not of God. History records many instances of famines and emergencies which men and nations have failed to anticipate and prepare for, but you cannot blame any part of this on God Almighty. No people ever starved unless others were too devilishly selfish to help in times of need. "*Give us.*" Note that there is a very short, but particular word, *us*, which suggests another short particular word, *we*. What are "*us*" and "*we*" going to do about what we ought to know, and can know, just what we will have to do if we ever get to Heaven?

The lightning rods of God's prevention have never been destroyed, nor put out of commission by Satan, or devil-possessed evil men who have desperately done their diabolical best to do so.

There are many kinds of temporal bread, as there are Heavenly or spiritual. We hunger for both, but more often fail to provide for the spiritual, which is the one already provided and ever ready for the asking aright. But most of us become so sodden with the material things of the world

that we starve our souls and overfeed a debauched palate and gluttonous stomachs. Christ did not come to establish the Fatherhood of God, but He did come to reinterpret it, which He has so gloriously done in the Sermon on the Mount, and the climax of the supreme objective is in the combination of His followers, and the Lord's prayer to God for His Kingdom to come. God had a sympathetic purpose for the whole world, so He sent Jesus to us with an immeasurable combination of love. *"Thy will be done in [thine] earth [Kingdom], as it is in heaven."*

God's Heaven Kingdom and Christ's earth Kingdom are now bound together with a bond of unbreakable, indestructible love for all mankind in the whole world, and Christ came to teach and instruct all who will *"take HEED"* how to come into His earthly Kingdom of Heaven, which is the gateway to God's Kingdom in Heaven.

God's Fatherhood cannot be defined. It can only be learned by experience, and Christ came to bring us into that glorious experience. Christ's Kingdom of God became also the Kingdom of LOVE. "FOR GOD IS LOVE," and love to the Christian became the new integral law of the Kingdom. The kingdom of Israel had the law—*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, soul, and mind."* But Christ brings us into His Kingdom with this same law, with Strength ADDED. And then the sublime injunction: *"And the second is like unto it, THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THY SELF."* Love, therefore, becomes the bulwark of the Kingdom of Christ. First, "OUR FATHER"; second, "HALLOWED BE THY NAME"; third, "THY KINGDOM COME." An infinitely glorious eternal and everlasting empire.

There is no such thing as self-will in the order and way of salvation, and there is certainly less after, for there is no

desire for selfishness in the mind heart and life of the true Christian. "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,*" not only becomes supreme and sublime, but it also becomes Divine.

12. "*And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*"

This is the one part of the Lord's prayer that makes it dangerous for any of us to pray. This debt business goes double: one is on the receiving end, while the other is on the paying. Debts don't make themselves, and they don't just happen, even if, like Topsy, they do grow. Darkey theology says, "If us wants forgiveness we all better do some forgiving." And we bread-eaters and we debt-makers must get up on Jesus' Heavenly Kingdom Christian platform before we can ever get into Heaven. As we are, so we shall be; as we do, so shall it be done unto us. So "us" and "we" are very closely related to us, as we are to Jesus.

A well regulated and controlled spiritual life automatically takes care of the material. Jesus laid an infallible spiritual foundation for every human life to safely and securely build upon. He holds the perfect blueprints and all the architectural plans for the beautiful, the strong, the glorious. There is only one person in the world it might not be possible for us to forgive, *that is self*.

Adam and Eve were surely never able entirely to forgive themselves, for one of their own sons became a murderer, and Cain surely never was able to forgive himself at all, yet the merciful God extended him mercy.

Jacob lied to his father, Isaac, to get his brother's blessing. Later his ten sons lied to him after they had sold their brother, Joseph, into Egyptian bondage. David committed adultery, then murder, to cover up his sin. God forgave all

of these and many, many others, all down through the centuries, but they all became penitent, as we must do to be forgiven.

13. *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."*

Some of the eminent translators say this should be: "And allow us not to be led into temptation." However it may be, *"We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."* The Bible says: *"God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."* It states further that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear. So we will always know whose fault it is if we fail. *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."* But this does not infer that if we run and jump in, that God is going to pull us out. Temptation is the devil's machine gun. He places it in every nest he can find about us. He is a strategist and takes an unfair advantage at our every turn in life. Jesus came and warned us. He is a greater and more powerful general than Satan. He met Satan and defeated him, and He will help us to do so if we follow His example and direction.

Jesus told us to "avoid the very appearance of evil." We had better get out and stay out of the devil's territory. We are too much like the boy who rolled out of bed. Slept too close to where he got in. We had better keep out of the devil's tricky beds and from between his dirty sheets, which are infested with every microbe of unrighteousness known to devils and evil men. Jesus prayed for us, not that we should not be tempted, but that we might have the strength to withstand.

Why has the young man, Joseph, been so eulogized for

centuries? Simply because he said: "*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*" His crowning act of success is the fact that he did not commit the transgression. The tragic thing with most of us is that we expect God to forgive us in time to escape damnation, regardless of what we do and how long we keep on doing it. It would be very difficult to explain all that temptation is, and exclude all that it is not. It is not a sin to be tempted. Jesus was tempted, yet without sin. He not only defeated the temptation, but the tempter as well. He gave us the perfect example.

14. "*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*

15. "*But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*"

Jesus, in these words, practically clears all doubt as to there being more than temporal needs included in bread and debts. The spiritual is always uppermost with Him. To determine, by the help of God, to forgive is far better than trying to forget, for what you think you have forgotten may come back to you at any time. And the same hate flames up anew until an agony of hatred becomes a fixture. If we forgive and forget as men it will not last. We must forgive as Jesus forgave His crucifiers at the Cross of Calvary. Then we will have something whereby we can distinguish ourselves as Christians.

Jesus practically says, "Ye have trespassed against God": "*All have sinned and come short.*" The two ifs in Jesus' words raise barriers that may keep us out of the Kingdom if we fail to meet Jesus' requirements. The spirit of anger, hatred and retaliation is very human. Jesus placed great importance on this debt and trespass forgiving. He made

it doubly personal. Striking is the fact that this is the only point in the Lord's prayer that He returns to interpret, explain and impress upon us the importance of our debt and trespass obligations to our fellow man, which so mightily affects our relation to God Almighty.

The Lord's prayer does not make God my Father unless it makes every man my brother.

I and my debt-trespassing enemy are both on common ground. I as a Christian have sinned against God. My brother has wronged me; now I as a Christian ought to forgive him as a sinner, just as I expect God to forgive me as a Christian.

Jesus practically says, "You are now a member of our Kingdom; then act like one. As a member of the Kingdom you have power; then show it in forgiveness. You want to share the Kingdom glory; then be glorious to others in forgiveness, returning good for evil, charity for all mankind." The reflex action of our daily lives flows out through many channels. Jesus came and made it possible for us to be like Him in spirit and in truth. The hardest things we have to do in this world are the best things for us to do. Jesus set us the example in that He did the hardest possible thing for Him to do for us. We should never expect to do less for Him and get by.

16. *"Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

17. *"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;*

18. *"That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto*

thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Although we do not fast as they did in the days of Jesus' sojourn on earth, yet we have the same complex reaction. Our make-believe is equal to, or more abominable than, that in His day, because the medium of publicity is so much more extensive. Mysticism—we like it, we coddle it, we make it a part of our religion, and that is what Jesus condemns.

The humanizing processes of religion have become of gigantic proportions. Whole nations have been deceived by someone, or a few men's leadership, and it has all but wrecked old humanity at times. Jesus knew what had been, and He knew what was and is yet to be, so He warned us not to be like men in worship, but to follow His example and direction. The greatness of God has been profoundly mystifying to men since the creation, and they become more and more mystified with each generation, as is evidenced by the fact that more new religions are organized by every new generation.

David, the Psalmist, said: "*O God, thou art from everlasting to everlasting.*" Therefore God is as old as time, and as extensive as space. All three have no bounds of beginning or ending. And wise reasoning teaches they could not have.

Most men will not countenance God because they cannot do more than touch the fringe of mysticism surrounding Him. They, like Adam and Eve, want to become as gods and know all things, so they become so confused in a maze of their own religious idiosyncrasies, and finally sink into the quagmire of false hopes and despair.

There are approximately two billion human mysticisms in this world, for there are that many human beings, no

two of them in all ways alike. This is only a small portion when all other life is included.

19. *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

20. *"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal;*

21. *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

Treasures touch every human being, in the head and heart at least. Jesus is the only king who ever talked about treasures like this, but He knew all things that had happened because of the abuse of these things, and He also, doubtless, foresaw the gigantic fortunes such as we have today, piling up greater and greater, the rich growing richer, and a greater percentage of the poor poorer, and the gulf ever widening between them. These conditions are causing serious troubles within and between nations, and more especially in the hearts and lives of individuals, to whom Jesus personally appeals.

Statistics show that two per cent of the people in these United States own half the wealth. A very similar condition exists all over the world. Jesus foresaw all this. Jesus' treasure standards are just as much an enigma today as they were to those who first heard Him declare them. His iron-clad rules condemn all of us. A few of us want to do and be right, poor as the effort may be. Others want to be and don't know how, while most people don't want to do anything for God.

Our Heavenly Father sent His Son to become His Heav-

only banker here on this earth. Jesus established that Heavenly branch bank and became the greatest and most profound financial leader and adviser of all time. The strength of every bank is measured by its resources. Jesus' bank not only has unlimited, but inexhaustible resources. His bonds and securities never depreciate in value. They are always above par. Some of His advised investments bringing one hundred per cent returns, and, in addition, one of God's eternal life insurance policies, which pays astounding premiums for all time. God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, His rightful heir to all the wealth of this world, right down out of Heaven to take charge of it, and He did this by organizing the only infallible banking system the world will ever know; and the glorious thing about this system is that all who will meet the requirements may become eternal stockholders in this Heavenly banking system.

Paul wrote Timothy: "*We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can take nothing out. . . . The love of money is the root of all evil.*" Is it possible for us to love riches? Yes, for men sell their souls and destroy others in their love of riches. Judas sold his soul, the most valuable and priceless treasure in this world, for thirty pieces of silver; then went out in remorse and hanged himself and became the most despised human being of history. Judas carried the bag, handled others' money. Dangerous temptations come to all who are so engaged. Judas did not become money-crazed in a day or overnight. He fell first in mind, then in heart, then came the perfidious act of betrayal. Jesus and Judas are the two most extreme and striking examples of history—Jesus the most idealistic, Judas the most despicable. None of us wants to be in the Judas class. *The Jesus way out is the only way to stay out.*

22. *"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*

23. *"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"*

The first important event taking place after the heavens and earth were created, over which darkness reigned: *"The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."*

God created only one kind of light, the white light of purity, which reflects God's love and righteousness from Heaven down to man on this earth, and that light has never changed. The spiritual light of God is the one. *"God said, Let there be light, and there was light."* God does not have to make His light shine, He just lets it shine, and it does shine. But this is the light that man has blasted and colored and obstructed all down through the centuries.

Jesus was the greatest light God ever sent into this world. Devil-possessed men put that light out (for all time so they thought), but for three days and nights only. Then the light reappeared more brilliant than ever, and has shone more and more brightly and clearly for each century and generation. There is no evil light, but sin does color and blind many, sometimes to the extent of permanent physical and eternal spiritual blindness.

There is no obstruction that can obscure the white light of God's righteousness and good will from those who are determined to see aright. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount provides a preventive for every hindrance to our full salvation, and safety for our singleness of eye, for God's eternal light to shine through us to others. We must see aright if we are to know aright. There has ever been a spiritual struggle between the forces of light and darkness. The former is

God's production. The latter is Satan's production, and he has used every conceivable deception to defeat God and humanity. Jesus said: "*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*" There is something wrong with our seeing when we do this. Any investment or treasure that costs a man his soul is tragic, to say the least.

Jesus asked: "*Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not?*"

It is safe to go only so far as our light extends. All too many of us disregard the warning and danger signals of life, and travel over highways and byways we know little or nothing about, and have no good reason for wanting to know.

Jesus said of Himself: "*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*"

St. John said of Jesus: "*In him was light; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*" We have a light that is helpful, and a darkness that hinders.

We can all see better than we see if we adopt Jesus' infallible method prescribed by Him for each and every one of us. May we pray for that light of eternal life that shines more and more unto the perfect day.

24. "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" Jesus, in this statement, gives us an extensive summary of making a choice, and when and how to make it.

The predominating thing in every human life is that we are going to make a choice; and so long as we live, some

new thing has to be decided at frequent intervals. Wise folks change for the better, but never for the worse. There are but two alternatives, right and wrong. It may be at times difficult to discern, but whenever doubt is involved we had better ferret the thing out to a logical conclusion before acting.

Youth is growing up today with an all too nearly universal disrespect for all restraint, beginning in the home and extending out into the world with the greatest youth crime wave in the entire history of the world.

There was a time in these United States when we were proud to be called a Christian nation; but we have gradually come to the point where we do not care, and when a people reaches the stage at which they care not, then they are not. No nation can serve two masters, any more than the individual. The Pilgrim Fathers came to this country by choosing to serve one master, the Lord God. When they came, they planted Christianity in this land, and they extended the Christian smile and glad hand of Christian fellowship to the Indian, who, by centuries of possession laid claim to ownership.

Now, the writer does not think for a moment that God ever intended this great continent to always remain in a wild state; but he surely does think God never intended the so-called Christian white race to come over here and rob as it did. There certainly was enough to allow the poor Indian to keep a little of the best in the land; but, no, the mammon servers and earth's treasure hunters never rested day or night, once they set their hearts on getting all of it. This government made hundreds of treaties with these Indians, but hardly ever fully kept one of them. It is still keeping the treasure hunters from getting the little balance the few Indians have left. How long the Federal government

will be able to keep these wolves off the Indians' backs is very problematical. We can only hope another national scandal of more broken treaties does not materialize. The Bible says: "*Ye shall reap what ye sow.*" Well, this nation has been getting some of the same treatment we dished out to the Indians—broken treaties and nonpayment of debts, of good money owed; but we see a good example at home right in our own national family. We sowed unrighteously and we are reaping what we sowed, and more than we sowed.

Remember the prophet Elijah and God, as against the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the challenge of Elijah for a trial by fire. Elijah threw down the challenge that if Baal were God, they should serve him, but let him answer by fire. But the challenge was not met. This is one of the most gripping and thrilling events. Read it. The poor dumb animals obey men better than most men obey God, and a dog is oftentimes more loyal and devoted to his master than the master is to God; and are we not, then, led to conclude that the animal kingdom creatures are wiser than most men?

Jesus abhorred evil in every form. He was the greatest abolitionist that ever lived. The masses have ever speculated on getting many things that are not worth the efforts and struggle it costs them. Nor will they give the least time, or part of their lives to Jesus Christ and Christianity.

Jesus did not come into this world to help humanity to sin less, but to bring a salvation that will keep us from sinning at all. We had better do some of our praying before the emergency comes. We may not have time or opportunity later. We can take time out for Jesus if we choose. He lay down His life to give us that privilege. He could not have done more. Can we afford to do less than our best for Him?

25. *"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"*

Jesus says some very pertinent things about thought and thinking. In His teachings He exalts the spiritual above the temporal. He said: *"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."* Idle minds are the devil's best rooms for building destructive fires that burn out the souls of humanity. Worldly and temporal things are his best fuel for building these fires that usually burn fiercely to our eternal destruction. Jesus did His best to kindle and rekindle in our minds, hearts, and lives the realization that spiritual things are more important than all else in this world combined. *"For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?"*

26. *"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"*

Oh, but you say we could not live like that in our sphere of life. Maybe not, but are we so sure the sphere we live in is the best? Sin has blasted and completely destroyed many nations. Can you pick out just one left that is conducting itself in a manner that pleases God Almighty? And how about the individual, when so few, so very few live for God the Jesus way?

27. *"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?"*

Many men in this world have striven desperately to add to themselves enough to become gods. Well, the greatest of them *never became more than atoms* of the real thing. Most

men in the world become parasites and leeches of humanity. Most of us want to get the best of others some time, somewhere, some way. But it is not the Jesus way.

28. *"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:*

29. *"And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."*

The thought for raiment has kept many out of the Kingdom, and the thought for nudity in the United States is the most shameful and degrading thing in any civilized nation in history. The sanctity of marriage and the home have sunk to an appalling all-time low degree. Many radio broadcasts daily make light of marriage, the laxity of restraint shown in the divorce evil and broken homes. Moving picture makers have gone beyond the bounds of common decency in belittling sacred things, temporal and spiritual, and among some of them the more hell-born material they can weave in, the better they like it, for they know that the riffraff of so-called society feeds and feasts on such things. The tragedy is that church organizations, and the ministry, and the courts and their judges have so woefully let down the standards in all the ramifications of the safeguards to the welfare of society.

30. *"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"*

"In the beginning God created" a world for mankind to live gloriously in, but man became rebellious and destructive, continuing in these channels until in most of the world humanity exists in miserable conditions, instead of the way God first established man in a paradise on earth. We can

destroy ourselves if we determine to do so, and drag others down with us in the doing of it.

31. *"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink, or,*

32. *"Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."*

Jesus, in the above verses of teaching, tries hard to lead us out of the fog of temporal things, and to engage our minds and hearts in the far more important spiritual things of life that count for eternity; so, in the following two verses He raises us to the sublime degree of the finale in which any honest seeker after Jesus, "the way, the truth, and the life," need not err.

33. *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

The first question God ever put to man is "Where art thou." The first question Jesus Christ ever put to man is "What seek ye." The first command Christ ever gave to man is "Come and see." The second command is "Follow Me." A combination for every layman to tie to. "WHAT SEEK YE? COME AND SEE, FOLLOW ME."

The trouble with most of us is, we reverse this command of Jesus in that we seek the Kingdom last instead of first. We do not put first things first. Paul said: *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."*

First seek good seed. There is a storehouse of the Lord God's provision with every kind of good seed you or I can ever need, and all we need, and it is ours for the seeking. For twenty years Jacob mourned for Joseph, and would not be comforted. He was told by his ten lying sons that

Joseph had been torn to pieces by wild beasts. Jacob believed that lie because they brought Joseph's coat back smeared with the blood of a kid. Jacob deceived his father with the skin of a kid. Jacob made Isaac, his father, suffer because of one lie he told him, and Jacob later had to suffer all his life from the effect of hundreds of lies others told him. The seed of lies and dishonesty, sin and evil, bring forth an hundredfold, the same as good seed. The same law of averages applies.

The writer knew of a railroad track walker who one night found the flood waters had washed out a bridge, so he ran down the track just as the passenger train came around the curve. But momentarily the engineer had his attention drawn to something inside the cab. The track walker waved his red lantern of warning, and when the engineer failed to see it, he hurled the lantern through the engine cab window. This, of course, roused the engineer, and when he saw the broken lantern he knew something was wrong. He applied his brakes and saved the train and all on board. We should be thankful for warnings of danger.

Jesus never made any plans for our acts of tomorrow. If we are wise, we will live today as if we were to die tomorrow, for our today may count more than an eternity of tomorrows. Most people fail to reason out and adjust themselves to the all-important things in this life. They fail to realize this is their last chance.

Old age is a terrible age for the man who neglects and rejects Jesus Christ. Eternal judgment will be an awful calamity for him, for it will be a long, long, long time to remember and think a lot of things over.

Man was lost by the persuasion of Satan in the Garden of Eden. He can be saved only by his unreserved allegiance to Jesus Christ. There will come a time in every thinking man's life when he will wish he had let Jesus come into his

heart and life when He first called and knocked at the door of his heart. He may be there knocking now. You had better let Him in. Getting into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is the superhuman task of everyone, but it must be done, or the soul will be undone for all eternity. Wise men shape their beliefs from the truths, facts, and acts of Jesus, but most people allow others to make a choice for them.

Solomon said: "*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end is the way of death.*" Solomon was credited by God with being the wisest man who ever lived (excepting Jesus). He surely had experience enough to qualify him as an authority on every essential of life. We should read and heed with great profit his warnings and direction.

34. "*Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*"

Jesus did not have to learn poverty. He was born into it, and He said: "*The birds have nests, and the foxes have holes, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*" Jesus, doubtless, came to know the deathly pangs of hunger and thirst and cold in His forty days' fast in the wilderness. Jesus knew by experience what it means to be homeless and friendless. Jesus came to know all about the vicissitudes of human life by actual experience. Hence, no one was ever as competent to advise us as He.

Life is tempestuous from the beginning. Every mariner is terribly tossed. The eternal lifeboat piloted by Jesus Christ is the only one to reach the eternal harbor of safety. Our canoe of life is too frail to go through the breakers alone. The Heaven-bound liner of Jesus has sailed on God's special schedule for over nineteen hundred years, without failure or defeat. Not a single loss of eternal life has befallen anyone of many millions who accepted Jesus' infal-

lible life preserver, prepared by Him for everyone who will accept it for the only safe journey of life to eternity shore. Heaven's harbor of safety is open only to Jesus' Heaven-bound Christian liners. The devil's gates and harbors are always open to any and everything that cares to enter. The riffraff and pollutions of the entire world have been, and are still, streaming in. It is a matter of choice with you and me, and there is no chance about it. We are going one way or the other, and to one place or the other. Jesus came to save men and women who go His way, for it is the only safe way.

No one has any reasonable right to expect God to change His schedule for his individual neglect, or stubborn bigotry. Jesus has privileged everyone to start out in life as they please, but to continue and end up is vastly different. The warnings of Jesus to humanity are so numerous as to be almost uncountable. The glorious Sermon on the Mount alone has sufficient number, if we would read and heed them, to make sure and safe our entire journey of both temporal and spiritual lives.

The crimson lights of Jesus' danger signals have mightily shone down through the mists of centuries, and yet, look at the countless millions and billions of souls that have gone on the rocks of destruction, in spite of all His blood-bought persecution, suffering and sacrifice. What more could have been said, or done to save all these who are so heedless and foolish in choosing self-destruction? Jesus' *wherefores* and *therefores* prefacing so many things and ways are very heart searching, if we are at all seriously inclined toward eternal life.

No one ever failed to succeed with Jesus Christ who made an honest and determined effort; for honest determined effort with Jesus is success.

XIII

JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MATTHEW 7

1. *"Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

2. *"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."*

Law and judgment were God's Old Testament religion.

Love and grace are His New Testament salvation and Christianity.

We must come to know the meaning of judgment and justice, love and grace, if we are to realize the profound importance of Jesus' warnings and commands to us. Jesus' teachings, preachings, commands and laws have no technicalities, yet they are all infallibly perfect in judgment, justice and reward, for the doing or undoing, obeying or disobeying when our very own judgment day comes, as surely come it will, for our own good or ill.

This law and judgment and justice business has ever been a gigantic problem, first to individuals, then nations. The use and abuse have been tragic. Theodore Roosevelt said: "We must make this a good country for all of us to live in, if it is to be a fit place for any of us to live in." This same logic applies to all nations. There have been, and still are, in existence millions of man-made laws (many of them counter to God's laws), administered by man-made judges, by man-made lawyers, by whom and through whom an

amazing and astounding corruption of judgment and justice is almost the universal order. Is it any wonder Jesus Christ so much more scathingly denounced this profession above and beyond all others? Quoting Jesus' own words: Luke 11: 46, 52: "*Woe unto you also ye, lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. . . . For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering ye hindered.*" Jesus put lawyers and the law profession, on Heaven's blacklist over nineteen centuries ago, and there has been little or no improvement since. The reverse order is the rule in many nations, and the profession in general.

It is not surprising that a man with the acumen of ex-President William Howard Taft (deceased) said of the present order: "The administration of law and justice has broken down in this country, until within all but a few States it has become a disgrace to civilization." And if he were alive today he would very likely eliminate the words, "all but a few States." This nation is so honeycombed with graft and juggled justice that our civilization is truly in danger of a tragic collapse. Jesus made every one of us his own judge and jury. Our judgment and criticism of others is recorded in Heaven, and will be reread to us when we get before the judgment bar of God. We better make the best record possible. It won't be any too good at best, and we may not get by at all. King David judged another, so he thought: but in the judgment condemning himself to death, he did not carry it out; and this is the way with all of us. But we had better have a care, for we can and do condemn ourselves to spiritual death for eternity. The Jews said in the crucifixion of Christ: "*His blood be on us and our children.*" It has been for over nineteen hundred years, and

still is, and the Jews are a people despised by the whole world.

Jesus deprives Christians of the right to criticize and judge others, not so much because they may not be guilty, but rather that it does them no good, and both harm. So-called Christians are the worst offenders. A wild young life decides to become a Christian, but tongues begin to wag and say, "Well, it is just about time he did something. But you mark my words, he won't hold out," and they will proceed to give one hundred and one reasons why, stopping only when they are all out of breath, but never once offering a prayer or word of encouragement to the new convert.

Jesus said: "*Ye judge after the flesh.*" As much as to say, "Ye are not competent to judge, so refrain from it entirely." We blame the tongue for a lot of things the unbalanced mind is guilty of. The mind is the generator of the tongue. It does not wag without prompting. Some wild animals can be tamed, but not some tongues, because their minds cannot be changed. Most people make life more comedy than stern reality. It is profoundly better to be rigidly tamed than to be irredeemably blamed. It is gravely dangerous for any of us to allow our minds to dominate our conscience; for, in so doing, we are very likely to destroy ourselves. There is a commendable tensity for application in every life, but we may become tense in a pretense, which becomes an offense to Jesus Christ.

Most of us are semihypocrites. Unconsciously perhaps, but we are very likely to be led into full-fledged hypocrisy. We usually deceive ourselves before we attempt to deceive others, and we justify ourselves before we condemn others. The grave danger is, we establish our own self-righteousness and then begin to measure others by it, which is the type of

judgment and measuring Jesus condemns. Some of us, like Saul of Tarsus, have to be knocked down before we can be brought to realize how much at variance with God's will we are living. It takes a hard jolt to bring some of us old sinners to our senses. King David had to be jolted off his throne, and publicly disgraced, before God could make a righteous man of him. Most of us have to go through some of the turbulent waters of life before we are fit subjects for the Kingdom. Again Jesus is our best pattern and example, and our only safe rule and guide to eternal life. May we strive to emulate Him.

3. *"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"*

4. *"Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?"*

Eye trouble is more dangerous for us in spiritual things than in temporal, yet we do not realize this important angle of it. But Jesus places the "why" right where it belongs—right up to our very own two eyes. Jesus' words here leave us looking into the glass beholding the beam in our own eye. Most of us say there is none in ours; but Jesus bids us look in the glass. Look yourself right straight in the eye and be sure to brush away all those worldly cobwebs that have been gathering there for the many years past, and you will be surprised at what you will find. With all too many the beam has already become so large as to entirely obscure the vision of self for faults and sin. Judging, measuring, and beholding others is like playing with fire in the tinder of our own daily lives. The sparks we let fly at others may easily set a roaring flame that may destroy a wide area,

and ourselves as well. First, do what is right, then right will rightly do itself.

The devil's cataracts are always hard to see through. We human beings cannot pull spiritual motes out of a brother's eye. It takes God Almighty to help him do that for himself, for one man cannot do this for another, although he may be a Christian; grace and love point out the way for him to do it for himself.

5. *"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."*

Jesus had to use some very strong spiritual medicine to cure some very contagious spiritual diseases, that all of us are very susceptible to at all times.

No man is ever as good as he appears to be if he is not Christian; and every man is better than he appears to be if he is a Christian. It all depends on our spiritual perspective. Faults are always thin when we look at others through our own selfish eyeglasses. The Holy Spirit is always willing to fit us with a pair of Christ's approved kind, guaranteed for eternity. This kind helps us all to see the sun in its glory of the morning sunrise, and the golden sunset. The Holy Spirit is ever drawing us upward and heavenward, but the devil is counteracting at all times. Each of us is endowed with the deciding vote, but we must register first for God, then vote for Him every time, which is a vote for the best in righteousness and humanity. It is very remarkable how many things we can behold in others that really do not exist. Christ saw all this and calls our attention to it, warning against it. All too many of us drive along life's highway and find nothing but weeds, not realizing that even weeds

have beautiful flowers on them at times; but, with beams in our eyes we see only the hideous stumps, and judge accordingly. The sunflower turns its face to the morning sun. That is more than we do as human beings to God. We do not turn to Him at all, any time, anywhere. God shines forth in nature in a thousand ways, but we fail to see Him in anything, because we are not looking for Him. We prefer to see the devil's weeds when beautiful flowers are abloom everywhere, praising God in their weak way. We forever seem to be concerned about the impressions others make on us, but we are entirely oblivious to what kind of an impression we make on others and the world.

Our good life is our lone asset in eternity. Some great blunders have been made in the world when the performers meant well; but well meaning is never a satisfactory antidote for wrongdoing. Yet no one should ever be defeated permanently by a mistake. We all need to curb certain human attributes and tendencies, and to encourage and aid our spiritual needs.

Jesus established a standard of spiritual perfection for every human being. If we do not measure up to that standard it is because we have never done our level best. Every tree grows and reaches as near to the sky as it can. We admire the giant tree, but we do not despise the little ones. They may be the best. The past shadows all futures. Shadows are made by realities. We are our own reality. A living sacrifice is better than a dead fortune.

We all shout our approbation for nature's wonders and blessings; then most of us refuse to honor the Creator of all these. All too many are trying to deadhead their way to Heaven. Men scheme and deceive, but God commands and rules. Human hearts filled with God's love inside shine

like diamonds outside. Let us all cast the beams out of our own eyes for Jesus' sake, and more especially for our own eternal sake.

6. *"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."*

Worldly people are seldom in sympathy with righteous Christians. Hence Jesus' warning.

No one who ever lived on this earth could understand the meaning of the above words as Jesus could, for if ever any gave that which was holy unto dogs of men, it was Christ, and He cast pearls before the swine of His day as no one has before or since. Man can and does sink lower than any animal God ever created, and the pity of it all is some women can and do sink as low. Christ Himself was the pearl of great price. He cast Himself at their feet, but they rent Him to death, and are still doing it from a spiritual standpoint.

Christ's Sermon on the Mount makes no compromise with intentional wrongdoing, and leaves little, if any, room for it through ignorance. Few, if any, men in the world today do not have access to the Holy Bible, or could have if they determined to get it and read it, and heed it. Pomp and paganism have no right in Christ's order of things. Heathenism has grown apace with Christianity everywhere in the world. Paul saw it creeping into the Church in his day and warned against it. Human theories and false traditions have been foisted at every turn of Christianity, and, strange to say, the wise in worldly wisdom have fallen prey to the deception beyond all sense or reason. Many of these have written great volumes on some new religion, and the result is they have always found some followers; and whole na-

tions have been lured into paganism and heathenism as a result of these false institutions. Satan offered Christ all the kingdoms of the world if He would fall down and worship him. Christ promptly rejected this, and Satan as well. But Satan finds men far more susceptible to his appeals, and the result is as the condition of the world indicates today, with which we are all aware. The Bible plainly states there will be false Christs, many of them, who will arise and deceive many through His name, and in various ways of deception. This has been constantly going on, beginning in the Church while Paul was the great missionary to us Gentiles; and since then there have arisen men who have laid claim to being the head of the Church of Christ, and invested themselves with supreme authority of religion for the whole world. They style themselves as infallible, and demand that all men pay homage to them. So Satan comes to men through men, and men bow to men as gods, who are false gods of Baal.

Christ never, at any time, appointed any man as head of His Church, nor left any hint that any man should ever be head of His Church, although many misinterpret His meaning when He spoke to Peter about it. Christ said: *"Upon this rock will I build my church,"* but positively, definitely and unequivocally he meant HIMSELF. Christ throughout the Bible is the rock. Peter denied Christ. He not only denied Him, he swore he never knew Him. No reasoning man will ever conclude Christ would establish His Church on a man like that, or any other like him; and all we men are just like Peter, none any better, and most of us much worse, for Peter did repent and got right with Christ, and went out to do yeoman service for Him; and that is what very, very few of us can claim. Christ and Christianity are not on trial with men. Men are on trial

with Christianity. Christ again and again said: "*Ye have heard,*" "*It is written,*" "*I say unto you.*" Christ used the pebbles of truth and the foundation of righteousness to found His Church, and man is to help build it out of the materials Christ furnished. Ignorance is the bulwark of Satan's domain and dominance. Since Christ was here upon earth, men, as men and rulers, have at times prohibited the circulation of the Bible, not because it is not true, but because it severely condemns all that is untrue. The Bible exalts God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church of Christ. But it subjugates man and makes him face himself first, and because Christ makes that facing so severe, men do not like to read to the point they are looking right straight into their own souls, wherein they find no special good and much of evil.

Christ has no vicegerents; but, thank God, He has many adherents left in the world, and they are the hope of the world. A nation without Christianity is a nation without hope. Little as they may realize it, education without Christianity only makes men devils incarnate. No nation has ever fallen at the height of its Christianity, but many have fallen at the height of their education without Christianity. Religion by force has been practiced in many centuries of the dark ages; persecution of Christians to the point of crucifixion in many horrible ways. Many horrible deaths show how man would act as a god if he had the power. Most men who become great, become greatly corrupt and great corrupters. This has been especially true of religions. Heaven-insulting heresy has been the common order since Christ. All this reached the climax in the thirteenth century, during the Inquisition; Babylon the great became "drunken with the blood of the saints." Millions of the saints were sacrificed to appease the vengeance pronounced upon them

by religious order. The moral midnights of the world have been during the period of reign of some powerful nation, and it is still midnight in many nations today.

The Waldensians carried the Bible through the thirteenth century, and in Britain John Wycliffe rose as the re-herald of the Gospel. It did not stop in England alone, but traveled far and wide throughout the whole world. Wycliffe bent every effort to print the Holy Bible in the English language, and finally succeeding, it was sent far and wide into the uttermost parts of the earth; and when men began to read they began to pray, and when men begin to pray, things begin to happen for God. And it did then, and has been doing ever since, until there is no more chance to keep people in ignorance about God and what He means to the world. Wycliffe gave the last of his strength to the spread of the Gospel of Christ, and when he died there followed others to carry on.

Next came Huss and Jerome, who were persecuted unmercifully and finally burned at the stake, but "the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church." Next came Luther, who threw out a world challenge, which came to be a world influence. Luther was the first of the later reformers to emphasize prayer. In it he discovered the generation of power. Luther declared that the Bible would refute every contradictory claim made against it and God, and Christ and Christianity, and he proceeded to expound it with such force as to rock the whole world, and the rocking has not yet ceased. Jesus' enemies have always thrown rocks at His Christian Church from outside, as have some people from the inside—doubly tragic.

7. *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*

This command of Christ is very puzzling when we consider that He so thoroughly covered the subject of prayer previously in this same Sermon on the Mount; but if we analyze these words we will find Him here referring to what we are to ask for as something called *IT*. Now Christ never spoke of salvation, righteousness, the Church, and Christianity, or any other spiritual element as *IT*. So there is only one conclusion the writer can draw, and that is that Christ for the first time in His Sermon on the Mount is telling us to pray for the material things of life. Some people will ask, "Why does He here tell us to pray for anything when He previously has said that our Heavenly Father knows what things we need before we ask Him?" So they say, "Why pray for these things?" But would it not be far more sensible to ask why we should not pray as Christ has asked us to do? Suppose no one ever came to ask us for anything, not even our children and loved ones; never invited us to a neighbor's house to the party, the wedding of our neighbor's youth! Why, even the animals of the forest and birds of the air crave association. Then, are we to neglect the common felicitations of life as human beings, let alone the spiritual side? So let us consider this in the passive light rather than in the line of rejection.

Every fond, true, wise and loving parent of children teaches them to pray from the cradle for youthful development. "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take," and "Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me; bless thy little lamb tonight; through the darkness be thou near me, keep me safe till morning light." Now, a child is in no danger of not going to Heaven if it should die as a child or as a youth before it reaches the age of accountability. Then why do we teach children to pray to

God for safety and His keeping? Now, many people teach their children to pray when they do not pray for themselves, when they and not the child are in danger. So Christ says: "Ask, and it shall be given you." What is this it we are to pray for?

Abraham prayed and God made him the father of a nation. Hannah prayed for a son, and the prophet Samuel was born. Elijah prayed, and the Heavens were closed up for three years for the glory of God. Elijah prayed again, and the three-year drought was ended. But the best example of prayer, as always, was Christ Himself, for both spiritual and material things. Prayer is the dial phone that connects us with God. A man to get a crop must plow and plant the seed, and to get God, a man must pray. If you would have complete victory over self, then pray for self. If you would influence others, then pray for others. If you would succeed, then pray for success.

An infidel once wrote a sign, "God is nowhere." A man saw it and changed it to read, "God is now here." Moving up one letter made a world of difference. So it does not take much to change our lives from wrong to right, and from sin to salvation. Jesus began His ministry by fasting and praying forty days in the wilderness, and He spent whole nights in prayer. Many times He prayed. All truly great men have been devoted to prayer. Washington knelt in the snow at Valley Forge; Lincoln prayed desperately to God to save this nation. Many men say they believe in Jesus Christ, but go right on disobeying Him. If we really believe in Him, we will obey His commands.

God helps the farmer most who farms the best. So in everything in life. If we do our best, Christ guarantees success. It is far better to go to Calvary in prayer, than to go to college without Christ. The eagle is a wise bird. It

avoids every danger possible. It builds its nest and nurtures its young far out on a rocky crag, where man nor beast can hardly get to them to disturb them, until the young can fly away from danger and be safe. Making a living and proper home surroundings for our families is important; but making a life is more important. All these things should go hand in hand, side by side with God and for Christ.

If we pray and obey as Christ tells us to, we have nothing to lose by it, but we fail and find too late we have lost our chance, which cannot be regained. What shall be our woe in eternity! The man who continues to leave everything to chance will find some day he has no chance left to leave anything to.

8. *"For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."*

Proven beyond the shadow of doubt is the fact that God loved humanity, and still does, for God does not change easily, as do we poor weak mortals; and He never breaks a promise. Christ here promised us something. *"For every one that asketh receiveth."* If we would just sit down for a few moments and count our daily blessings we could not deny that we do receive. And seeking, we have found much that is worth while, and marvelous things have opened up to us. We do not live in a land of make-believe, but in a world of stern reality. My individual destiny rests in my own hands to a certain point. I can make it or mar it at will. To obey Christ is to make it, but to disobey is to break it, and so long as I live I shall have the chance to make it. Mistakes in life can either become a millstone about our necks or they can be made into stepping-stones by which we can rise to higher ground. All of God's great saints made mistakes. Moses made at least two grave mistakes.

Paul made many grave mistakes, yet God raised him to the heights; and He will lift us up if we, too, are honest enough to confess our sins and get right with God.

Christ does not say we are to get everything we ask for. No wise, loving parent gives his children everything they ask for. Not because he does not love them, but he knows it is not best, so he gently but firmly refuses, and the child slowly learns to know it is best some things are refused. Overindulgence is a curse to anyone, so we are told to be "temperate in all things." One of the Ten Commandments says: "*Thou shalt not covet.*" Covetousness is one of the devil's most destructive forces. We are led by him to covet material things, which, if we should succeed (as so many do) in receiving them, they would (and do) send us into a Christless eternity.

Solomon became the richest man the world has ever known, but he said: "Better is a little with contentment than riches without it." No man should pray for anything he cannot use to the glory of God. All too many of us meet and overcome the challenge of big things, and then easily fall a prey to little things that defeat us in the battle of life.

We should consider our praying from Christ's weights and measures standard. In the Lord, or disciples' prayer, there is the sentence, "*Hallowed be thy name.*" We are prone to covet the reverse, and want God to hallow our names. Again, it is, "*Thy will be done.*" But we want it to be our will that is done. Again, it is, "*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.*" But we reverse this and want God to glorify ourselves, which would be a curse to us all instead of a blessing. All too many of us trust our own wills and judgment, seemingly afraid to trust God and Christ and the Holy Spirit.

A mother will take her first-born to the kindergarten the

first day away from home, and will offer a bit of a prayer to God that the one she loves better than her life will be safe, and she trusts to others the care of that child, but the same mother refuses to place the same child in the care of Christ for life and eternity. No one ever risked anything with God Almighty and lost. And no one ever took a chance with Him and failed to win. God is the only one sure investment in the world. He is the only sure one hundred per cent dividend ever offered. There is never any drought or crop shortage with God Almighty. Christ established the only one infallible board of trade and stock market the world has ever known, that has never lost anyone anything ever invested in it. Christ has a peculiar way of computing dividends. Christ guaranteed all accounts ever invested with His company. He has a chain of department stores that cover the whole world. His rule and guidebook (the Holy Bible) tell all just how to obtain stock and make a sure investment. There are no bargain counters in His organization. You do not get something for nothing, but you do get what you pay for, and the greatest prize bonus ever offered, for Jesus Himself said: "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard of the things God hath prepared for them that love and serve him.*" Sounds as if it might be pretty good. WHAT DO YOU THINK? OR DO YOU THINK? OR HAD YOU BETTER NOT THINK?

9. "*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*"

10. "*Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*"

11. "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father give good things to them that ask him?*"

Christ here brings to us one of the most simple and

homely illustrations of the entire Sermon on the Mount. The most despicable thing any man can do in this world is to mistreat his own family. God Almighty established the home as the first and foremost institution in the world, and He made every man king in his own household, and every mother queen in her household. No two homes have ever been regulated and ruled exactly alike; hence, a different influence reigns in every home. Therefore, so many different types of product, no two alike in the billions that have come and gone, and will continue to come and go. Normal parents do not willfully destroy their children's future welfare and happiness, but they do willfully neglect to acquaint themselves with the best methods and put them into practice for the prevention of the evil influence which leads all mankind astray.

If we start wrong, we are very apt to end up wrong, for wrong never did end up right, any more than right ever did end up wrong. Truth never changed to error, no more than error has ever changed to truth. There is a law of truth, and there is a law of error. They cannot be harmonized, and there is an irrevocable separation. Christ has previously set this forth in spiritual things, and it applies to material things as well. Right and wrong will not mix any more than righteousness and unrighteousness. We speak of right and wrong as a material status. It applies to all things as well.

If Jesus felt the need of prayer in all the important events of His earthly life, how much more do we need ask and seek and know just the kind of gifts to give to our children. Christ prayed over the few loaves and fishes, and the multitude were fed, and plenty was left over. You might be surprised if you would check up to find how many times Christ supplied the material things in a miraculous way. His

mother asked Him to supply wine at the marriage at Cana, which He did. He healed countless numbers. He raised many from the dead. He stilled the sea by His word. Twice we have records that He fed the multitude. He opened the blind eyes, unstopped the deaf ears, and many other material things did He for those about Him, showing that He is interested in our every need.

12. *"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."*

"Therefore all things." What a marvelous climax and divine summary! No man with a fair degree of intelligence can misapprehend the meaning of this most comprehensive command of Christ. The reason why it is so gripping is because it is so fair to all. There is no class or distinction between us and anybody else. We strike the dead level, the common ground. This is not socialism. It is just plain Christian brotherhood, with a superb divine setting, which, if universally practiced, would bring Heaven right down to this old earth. Many will say it is impossible of attainment. Universally, yes. Individually, no. But none of us will ever get to Heaven universally. It will only be individually, and strictly private. The grandeur of Christianity is not arranged in pomp and splendor. It is beautified by humility and service to all mankind, by doing unto others as ye would be done by.

Paul also raised our standard to sublime heights in his letter to the Romans. See Romans 12:9-10: *"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; IN HONOR PREFERRING ONE ANOTHER."*

Paul's 8th and 12th chapters of Romans, and the 13th

chapter of First Corinthians are only a few of his sermons we can mightily profit by if we read and heed. If any one of us were going on an extensive journey to an important destination, we would get the best map or chart of direction possible to obtain. But every one of us is on just that kind of a journey to a very important destination, whether we realize it or not. We are on our way, but which way? Jesus made every effort and sacrifice possible to map the course and chart the way for every one of us. We cannot accept or reject His direction as we choose, but we cannot make that journey and come to that important destination as we choose, BUT AS HE CHOOSES, AND BY HIS DIRECTION.

The Golden Rule, as we choose to call it, IS SUBLIME.

Jesus, by profound precept and example, chose to sacrifice and suffer far above and beyond what He asks of us, and we are all able to do better than we are doing. And we had better ask ourselves what is going to happen to us if we fail to do our best to observe and follow Jesus' directions. Jesus never spoke an idle word during His ministry. It is inconceivable even to think He would warn us of something that does not exist, or would never take place. Good and true men never purposely suffered, sacrificed, and died martyrs for fancied or imaginary things. Don't be misled by the thought that Jesus the Son of God played any spectacular rôle, for He said what He meant, and meant what He said, and you and I had better read and heed accordingly.

The Golden Rule is divinely practical, but it is not easily applicable. Christian faith and prayer generate the power of love in applying the Golden Rule, for that is what it takes in full measure; and to "love thy neighbor as thyself" takes all the reserve power at our command. One phase of life does not round out the whole. Jesus' Christianity is not

a brooding religion like so many others that have sprung up in the past, many of which still exist. The sweet teachings and preachings of Jesus condemn and shame the rubbish of theology, and church politics, and many fallacious items of today.

Jesus prompts us to be more concerned in teaching and preaching about God and spiritual things than temporal. Christian spiritual power may not prevent all the ills that life is heir to, but it does cure them if applied as Jesus prescribed and directed. God planned a standard of righteousness and goodness in the world. Jesus came to set up that standard; the Holy Spirit came to permanently establish and carry it on.

Jesus was more practical in His teaching, preaching, and action than anyone else who ever lived in this world. Equal reaction is the result of nature's laws. Jesus gave us the same spiritual law in the Golden Rule. Scientists, psychologists, and philosophers have successfully dealt with mechanics. Jesus became greater than all of them, for He successfully dealt with men, making it possible for us to become heirs with Him in His Christian Kingdom, until we are translated into our Father's Heavenly Kingdom.

13. *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

14. *"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*

15. *"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

16. *"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn*

down, and cast into the fire. WHEREFORE BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM."

Beware! Beware! Beware! All Jesus' warnings flash like lightnings, and crash like thunder to all open eyes and listening ears. They are the foghorns and lighthouses of danger signals that will prevent any of us going to destruction, if we will observe and do as He commands. Jesus points out to us a glaring hindrance and obstruction to salvation and righteous fruit-bearing. Beware of false prophets which come to you.

Striking is the fact that the first prophet of history was false. For the serpent, the emissary of Satan, the devil, was that prophet. Falsity is written all over the first religious event in history. God gave to Adam a very reasonable command, which, doubtless, would have been obeyed if he and Eve had been left alone to continue on the even tenor of their way. But there was, and still is, a subtle, opposing, destroying, and unseen power, which is the master mind and generating influence of all false prophets dominating them in doing his bidding.

Jesus said of Satan: "*He is a liar and the father of lies.*" We have the proof of this in the first act of his earthly appearance to mankind, through some deceptive channel of falsity that makes it the most diabolical event in history, for it is the primeval cause of all following disasters and destruction of humanity, individually and collectively. The fall of Adam and Eve means the fall of all mankind, making the event tragic, and the false perpetrator of it, despicable and diabolical.

Who have been the false prophets since Jesus warned us to BEWARE of them? All men who have been false in their speaking, teaching, preaching, and hypocritical religious acts to deceive others, are false prophets, and their number

is legion. The vast number of false religions in the world have been the product of false prophets, man-made, devil-directed, sin-debauched, insulting God in every scheme and way possible.

In some of these religious orders bedeviled men have set themselves up as Christ-appointed, selected leaders, representing Him; while still others have eliminated Him entirely in their claims of direct contact with God. "Beware," said Jesus, knowing these false prophets and Antichrists would arise. What constitutes false prophets? Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, did not say; but He did later in no uncertain words and terms. We should read and heed them for the warnings and safety which they insure.

Jesus never allowed any man, or organization of men, to bestow upon Him any religious furbelows, or any man-made ordinations that so many religious aspirants desperately strive to acquire, even to the extent of losing their own souls in placing more credence in this ceremony than they do in the bestowal of the Holy Spirit of God in their hearts and lives, and without which all religious teachers, preachers, and prophets are false.

Jesus refused the bestowal of any man-made honor upon Himself. Nor did He ever advocate man-made honor for any layman for preaching the Gospel and Christian leadership. Jesus, as a layman, told all laymen to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. But He also told all laymen to wait for the fulfilling of the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, and only then, is anyone prepared to preach the Gospel the Jesus way.

17. *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."*

18. *"Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"*

19. *"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

This is the first reference of His second coming, which will be discussed later. This is one of Jesus' greatest warnings in His Sermon on the Mount. Religious words and phrases are not necessarily worship of Jesus Christ. Many people have staked their lives on the sincerity and right of a self-taught conscience, who have been so tragically wrong that it beggars description. Saul of Tarsus was the most striking example of history, for he persecuted Jesus and His loyal band of followers to the extent of murder; yet he said later, *"I did it in all good conscience."* But Paul did vastly more than just say, "Lord, Lord," for when Jesus brought him to see the error of his way, he said, *"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"* and the Lord told him, and he did it so well that he became the greatest Gospel warrior of all time (excepting Jesus).

Elijah was one of God's chosen prophets, and the channel through which God performed a great miracle, which gave to the world such an object lesson of the difference between those who say things to be heard and those who do things to please God. Elijah challenged the false prophets who worshiped false gods, and especially Baal, as the chief of their gods. And Elijah said unto these false gods and the people: *"If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him."* The test was to be by fire. The false prophets of Baal cried long and loud, from morn till evening, but no answer came. Then Elijah called upon the true God, who did answer by fire, and the people said, *"The Lord, he is the God."*

Elijah and his God, in a great test with false prophets, and their idol gods. Here is a sample of many false prophets, and the number is legion that have risen up out of every generation and perverted the way of the Lord. However conscientious and sincere the false prophets of Baal were, they did not give their god power to answer by fire; but Elijah's God had the power from everlasting to everlasting. An infinite miracle is no special effort for our God to perform. The fact is that God does not perform anything that is not a miracle. He leaves the rest to humanity. You and me, if you please.

God created all things existent, which makes all existent things miracles. God created the earth, and sun, moon and stars, and hung them upon nothing. Darkness was never created, like time and space—it always existed. When, where, and how did anything tangible that exists ever cease to be a miracle? No man ever created anything, not even a thought; so everything that exists is of miracle creation. The Kingdom of Heaven Jesus speaks about is of miraculous creation. St. Paul said: *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things God hath prepared for them that love him."* Jesus said: *"I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also."* What a great and grand legacy to all who do the will of our Heavenly Father!

20. *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

21. *"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*

Jesus is the first, last, and only infallible authority for telling us how to get to Heaven. He said: *"I am the door."*

. . . *He that climbeth up some other way is a thief and a robber.*" Jesus Himself is the gate to and up the narrow way. *"What seek ye?" "Come and see"; "Follow me"; "Ye must be born again"; "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* Before anyone can enter, the entrance must be found. It must be pointed out to us in some manner. It is one thing to discover the entrance, quite another to enter. Many come to know how, who never enter. They make many excuses, but have no good reason.

Most people have ever asked, Why is the entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven, and Eternal Life so strait, and the way so narrow, as compared with the wide gate and the broad way which lead to destruction. They do not want to enter the strait gate and travel the narrow way, for Jesus' supreme effort in coming was to point the way and tell us where, and when, and how. Jesus begins by commanding us to enter the strait gate and travel the narrow way, because the other way leads to destruction. This looks like reason enough, but most people do not reason nor think things through. To enter the strait gate we must go in alone, but the entrance to the broad way of destruction is wide enough for us to go in with the crowds that have steadily and increasingly proceeded to do so by their own voluntary choice. Jesus foresaw all this; hence the striking warning. Can you think of anything more Jesus could have said or done that would have stopped you and me from entering the wide gate and traveling the broad way to destruction? Why not be fair with the best friend humanity ever had. Place the blame right where it belongs, and pray, *"God be merciful to me a sinner,"* for that is what we all are.

Wise men have trusted and obeyed Jesus so implicitly that they entered because of His profound recommendation. Millions have testified that they have found the gate and the way just as Jesus described them. Hard, yes, but not too hard, rugged and steep but that we can climb it. Never has there yet been found one who, on reaching the top, and the end of the Jesus way, has said, "I am sorry I did not go with the crowd through the wide gate and down the broad way." But uncountable millions who have gone that way have cried out in wailing and gnashing of teeth, as the throes of death closed in upon them, but too late—too late.

Ask the millions of down-and-out drunkards who have dragged their families, loved ones, and friends down with them into disgrace. Ask the fallen women who sold their souls so cheaply. Ask the prostituted men with a foul and loathsome disease eating the vitals of their lives away. Ask any and all who chose the evil instead of the good, and they will tell you by all means to take the Jesus way and never turn back.

No man who ever let Jesus touch his life remained the same, and no man who refuses to let Jesus touch his life remains the same. It is either better or worse. A solemn belief and working trust in Jesus Christ that never lets go, will get anyone into the Kingdom. Men have crashed the gates of practically everything in this world, but none of them the gates of Heaven. Entrance thereto is not gained that way. Jesus commands us to suit our will to God's plans, and not His plans to our will. We either bend or are broken. Both the strait gate and the wide gate are always open. There are two destinies, and only two—both eternal.

God told Noah to enter the gate of the ark, and all who entered were saved, and all who did not enter were lost. They were lost not so much because of the terrible flood,

but because they did not enter before the gate was shut and the deluge of destruction came upon them.

Enter ye in at the gate that our precious Lord called strait, and walk with Him each day to Heaven above the blessed way.

22. *"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*

23. *"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."*

The sayings of Jesus are to teach mankind who and what to believe. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them" is a wise man. We are the question marks, and "whosoever" takes in the whole world.

Jesus gave us many warnings, and much instruction, and all of us want to be considered wise; but very few of us are eager to comply with the admonitions of the greatest teacher and preacher of all time.

We might say, in our vernacular, the Sermon on the Mount is the preamble and constitution of Christianity, for Jesus' newly organized and established Church Kingdom. Upon the hearing and doing of Jesus' sayings our lives are measured, and our souls weighed in the balance for time and eternity.

There is only one infallible profession of salvation; that is the possession of it. We cannot possess breath without breathing, to sustain the physical life, nor can we possess salvation without breathing the spiritual soul breath of God. Jesus leaves a profound decision for you and me to be either wise or foolish in our hearing and doing, or undoing, for time and eternity. Hearing the sayings of Jesus is only the kindergarten of our spiritual preparation. Doing them

is the full measure of our bounden duty and devotion to the Kingdom builder, and the Kingdom that has no end.

Jesus said: "*All power is given unto me. I and my Father are one.*" His Sermon on the Mount is the greatest revelation ever preached in history, and it is also the most revolutionary message of all time.

Jesus is Lord and Master of reason and wisdom. He is the Divine encyclopedia of everything mankind will ever know, or think. His sayings are the powerful controls that every life is commanded to adhere to.

All wise men's thinking and reasoning turn and return to Jesus Christ. Our estimate of the sayings of Jesus shapes our eternal destiny.

The sayings of Jesus have never been on trial, but the hearers of them have. James, in his epistle, says: "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.*" Every good sermon always outlives the preacher.

Jesus' sayings have gloriously overridden all the evil criticisms of the world. The science of wisdom embraces the reality of truth, not mere opinions. Genius was created by God, not born of men, as some suggest. Jesus' sayings left many rules for guidance, but no orders of compulsion. To know the sayings of Jesus, and do them, are the two greatest well-springs of life. To know truth is good, to execute it is better. It shows the seed that brings into fruition the golden grain of spiritual harvest that blesses the world. We must do most of the acquiring in this life of everything that is really worth while. Wisdom existed before the creation, else there would not have been any. Jesus came and explained it. We can attain it in the Jesus way, which is the best for eternal results. Feeble, indeed, are the attempts of anyone to comment on the sayings of Jesus. Wise are they who read and heed them in minute detail. Any other manner of life is pronounced the rankest folly by Jesus Himself.

24. *"And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:*

25. *"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell: and great was the fall of it."*

Jesus reaches the climax in spiritual attainment as He develops and summarizes the contents of His Sermon on the Mount; and bids our acceptance and application of them in living His way of life.

Jesus says that we are wise doers, or foolish undoers, either for Him or against Him. The shifting sands of worldly life will not stand the floods and winds of adversity, and history is littered with the wreckage of destruction of so much building on the wrong foundation and in the wrong places Jesus warned and rewarned us against.

The personal physical house we live in is the most important one we shall ever build, and the attitude of our souls toward Jesus will determine as to our eternal joy with Him throughout eternity, or our eternal woe, without and away from Him forever, and that is for a long, long, long time. It may be all right to be slow in thinking and deciding—just so we think and decide in time correctly. Practically every subject mentioned by Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount is referred to, and emphasized by Him, in many ways later.

For illustration, we have the rich man and the beggar Lazarus; also the rich young ruler who wanted to know what good thing he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus said: *"Go sell that thou hast and give the poor. But he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."* Jesus said a rich man shall hardly enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We laymen are terribly stingy with God Almighty, and

Jesus mightily condemned us for this, and we had better have a care. There are no scales in the world with the capacity to weigh some very humble sacrifices and gifts. Air cannot be weighed, yet it is very powerful. We cannot weigh spirituality, yet it is all powerful. Loyalty should be every layman's heart-throb. Jesus said: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God.*" There is an earthly law of gravitation that draws downward, and there is a spiritual law of inspiration that lifts us upward. We decide our own fate, we choose our own eternal destiny.

The Lord God does things to man, and through men. So does Satan. But Jesus Christ is going to come out winner in the end, and we want to be on the winning side, which, in this particular, bulks large for eternity. There are no shiftless or ne'er-do-well ways to get to Heaven. There are two channels of power—one impelling, the other expelling. This latter leads to conjecture, confusion, contradiction, and destruction, and Jesus said, "*Great was the fall of it.*" Speaking from a deep and sorrowful experience, some of us know and fully realize that the devil defeats us when we least expect it in some very good intentions and well-meaning acts of life. This is indeed tragic. But to deliberately and determinedly choose to build on the sands of the world is both physical and spiritual suicide.

God gives everyone some credit for doing the thing he thinks is right, even though he is wrong in the doing of it. But this was the supreme objective in Jesus' coming and doing all that He did to help us determine the right from the wrong ways of doing things in life. Most of us wade so deep into the quicksands of life we are unable to extricate ourselves from the suction of sinful gravity that finally submerges us in the eternal depths of a Christless, hopeless eternity.

26. *"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine."*

27. *"For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."*

If Sts. Matthew and Luke had never recorded anything more than the Sermon on the Mount, they would deserve a prominent place in the halls of fame. All wise men's thinking and reasoning turn and return to Jesus Christ, for time and eternity. The reciprocity set forth in Jesus' sayings for and to all mankind was more than a revelation. The whole order developed a sublime revolution, which, down through the centuries, spread throughout the whole world, with an ever increasing and tremendous power, astonishing people at first, confounding them as He progressed, and astounding more and more people with the irresistible force and the universality of the founding of his world-wide Kingdom. Jesus' revolution is vastly different from any and all others. His own words explain and clarify His mission and commission: *"I come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly."*

Jesus saw and realized the effect of the heresies of many false religions upon humanity. Some of these have caused revolutions, rebellions, violent bloodshed, and tragic destruction. His sayings were a burning chastisement for all their demonized leaders and their deluded subjects. Little wonder the people were astonished at His doctrine. *"For never man spake like this man."* The maledictions of Jesus against everything false or untrue burned deeply into the conscience of every soul whom His sayings or acts touched, drawing them closer to Him, or driving them farther away. So much so that there must be a turning to Him, or a tragic eternal turning away from Him.

The contradictions of mankind concerning Jesus, His

sayings and doings, are uncountable, and many of them so demonized as to be humanly unthinkable, and spiritually diabolical. The satanic epithets hurled at Jesus and the faith He established on this earth can only be justifiably punished by God Himself. It were far better if the guilty had never been born, for their doom is pronounced, and the penalty terrible.

No wise man will ever attempt to criticize anything that is perfect. Jesus Christ is supreme, and He came to give humanity a new lease on eternal spiritual life, and most of them refuse to let Him.

Jesus' concern for just folks and their future welfare cannot be fathomed. He is like unto time, and space, and light; the sun, moon and stars; the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, and many other blessings that cannot be counted for the preservation of all mankind. Jesus came personally to surpass all else previously bestowed upon us with a free and a full salvation for all of us who heareth and do His sayings. The intellect of every human being is a God-given function, but only an ingrate ever uses it to oppose the Creator who gave it to us. We are not made better by attempting to lower high things down to our level, but by being raised up to the high standard of the sayings of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the same at the end of our lives that He was in our beginning. We should never pray for God to make us better, but good Christians, and then strive for perfection in righteousness.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is a complete estimate of the building and completion of every life for eternal safety; but we must build according to His specification, or our spiritual house will fall, and great will be the fall of it. May God wake us and make us what we should be.

XIV

THE CONSUMMATIONS OF JESUS CHRIST

JESUS' Sermon on the Mount is the greatest ever preached, because it covers every fundamental principle of every human and Divine life. Jesus preached, and taught, and worked miracles for which many tried to kill Him. God's greatest things have been foolishness unto most men, because most men are astoundingly foolish. Bible and secular history prove this positively. When Jesus started preaching His mountain peak sermon, His disciples were present. But when he finished, the people were present as well. And when He came down from the mount, great multitudes followed Him, for they were all astonished at His actions and doctrines. He started right out into what might be termed a campaign of wholesale healing. Jesus was more than a miracle performer (of which the world has had many, most of them fakers). He was an infallible miracle-doer, profoundly supreme. Skeptics got around Jesus' healings, but they could not minimize His power when He began raising the dead, of which the widow's son was the first on record that Jesus raised.

Jesus then began to forgive the sins of lost souls, and proved His right and power to do so. Jesus then began to preach and teach in parables (not riddles, as some accuse), so that skeptics and fools would be left in their chosen perverted state of mind and heart. Jesus Himself said: "*All power is given unto ME. I have all power.*" This is all-sufficient—no one could have more than this, and He proved

that HE did have all power by and through God the Father and God the Holy Ghost.

Jesus cast out unclean spirits, demons and devils, and performed many other necessary miracles to restore a sin-cursed humanity.

Jesus, in His resurrection of Lazarus, after He had been dead four days, proved that He not only had power to raise the dead, but to re-create and make whole again, giving a new body by the power of His spoken words. All Jesus ever needed to do was to speak the word, and it was done.

Many of the consummations of Jesus' early ministry might be profitably mentioned, but we hasten to the last event, recorded only by Luke, before the last week of Jesus' marvelous finale.

Luke 19: Zacchæus climbed up into a tree to get a better look at Jesus as He passed by, but Jesus saw him and bade him come down, for He said: "*Today I must abide at thy house,*" which He did, and brought salvation. Jesus abides only at the house to which salvation has been brought. Many of the sayings and doings of Jesus led followers to believe He was going to set up His earthly Kingdom right soon, hence the event that took place upon His entry into Jerusalem. But before this Jesus relates to them the parable of the nobleman (Jesus being the nobleman referred to), but the multitude did not understand then, and few have ever understood since. Jesus had portrayed in many ways and words that His first coming was only temporary, but they would not take no for an answer. They were determined to have their own way then, and have so determined to do ever since. But God rules, and overrules. He has done so in the past, and will most surely do it again.

There is far more definite and positive prophecy and proof of Jesus' second coming than there was of His first,

before He came. We have many times Jesus' own testimony, witness, and demonstration directly, showing that He was to go away, but more definite and positive that He is to come again. The prayer that Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount is the first indication of record by Jesus of the second coming to set up His Kingdom. *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."* Neither of these has ever taken place yet, but they will.

Matthew 8 records devils questioning Jesus as to His second coming: *"Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"* The devils knew it was not yet the time for Jesus to set up His Kingdom and rule, and overrule and control all things in this world, but He is coming to do that. The writer is not wrought up over the second coming of Christ; but if there is no importance or consequence attached to it, why did Jesus and others so profoundly emphasize it, not only in words, but in many ways? People want to know and believe the truth.

Luke 13:35: *"Behold, your house if left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."*

Luke 17, beginning with the twentieth verse, gives Jesus' lengthy description of His marvelous and spectacular second coming.

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them,

nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."

The first time Jesus came it was in weakness and meekness. The next time He comes it will be in power and great glory. Jesus approached the last week of His sojourn on earth with the public in what might be termed a blaze of glory. They gave Him a glorious triumphal entry into Jerusalem, shouting His praises, and declaring Him their chosen leader. It was a time of rejoicing for His followers, but not for Jesus. It was His most sorrowful entry into that great

city. He foresaw what they could not—His own persecution and crucifixion, and the future tragic destruction of the people and city of Jerusalem by famine and sword. But in the face of it all, Jesus was more concerned about humanity than He was of Himself, for He wept over the city, saying: "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have saved you, but ye would not. Behold, desolation shall be your lot and portion.*"

But Jesus' great popularity was not to be for long. For the same day he went into the Temple and denounced the priests and scribes, and drove the merchandisers out of the Temple, saying, "*It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*" From this time forth the battle was on. During the last week of the persecution and crucifixion of Jesus He vehemently denounced all offenders, but just as lovingly encouraged and commended all who were loyal to Him.

Jesus gave us two new commandments: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*" Jesus built His Church upon the foundation of love, and the entire structure constitutes love and service, and loyalty to these principles; and Jesus' last prayer on the Cross was for His enemies, saying: "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*" This was, indeed, the most profound example of love in all history.

Matthew 24 and 25, also Mark and Luke, record the marvelous words of Jesus' own portrayal of His marvelous second coming. Anyone wanting to know the truth concerning this very present-day contentious question can have it clarified for themselves without any human being to confuse them in any way, for it is not only made plain, but

simple as well. Jesus' farewell discourse to His disciples might be termed the glorious finale of a transcendent life. Only John, in Chapters 14, 15, and 16, records this, just as he only records some of the very important sayings of Jesus in the beginning of His earthly ministry, with little in between.

The devil-possessed Judas' betrayal of Jesus, the diabolical mock trial, the damnable humiliation, the cursed miscarriage of justice, the bloodthirsty spirit of hate, and revenge, and murder are the most violent and hideous event in history, BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY TIME IN HISTORY WHEN MAN WAS EVER ALLOWED ANY DEGREE OF MASTERY OVER GOD. Which, of course, was only temporary, and of short duration.

John 3:16: "FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD . . ." is the only reason that Satan and all his devils and demons, and all his following, were allowed so to possess and obsess men that they would fiendishly commit all the abominable things they did commit against Jesus Christ.

This world's greatest catastrophe has astounded and confounded wise men for the past nineteen centuries, but too much Satan and too many devils and demon-possessed men is the only logical solution. They were not only the subversive power then, but have remained so ever since.

A very prominent and able Southern jurist recently made an exhaustive study of the crucifixion of Jesus in the light of Roman law, and he declares that the law was violated twenty-one times in the entire period of Jesus' persecution and crucifixion. Is it any wonder Jesus so scathingly denounced man-made lawyers, their laws, and their perversion of justice and judgment? And, in fact, it is the only profession in existence He did denounce.

Jesus gave to the world the greatest example of humility

in history when He took upon Himself the form of a servant, and washed the disciples' feet, even the feet of Judas, His betrayer. Jesus here proved that He never ceases to love the sinner, even though He hates the sins that we commit. Jesus went from the Last Supper with eleven of His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, and there prayed: "*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*" This has led many people, including many preachers, ministers, and religious leaders, to declare that Jesus weakened at the last and tried to forego the death on the Cross. This is the most blasphemous lie that was ever spoken or written. What Jesus really prayed to forego was what He knew He was to suffer in humiliation and persecution before the actual crucifixion on the Cross; and if you will carefully follow through, this fact will become clear to you.

(1) The betrayal of the hypocritical kiss by the devil-possessed Judas.

(2) The mob who came to take Him by force, stood there looking on as Judas performed the most damnable act of all history. This alone was more detestable to Jesus than the death on the Cross. But this is only the beginning of the many humiliations.

Jesus said to Judas: "*Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*" Again let me say, this one act alone was enough to cause Jesus to pray as He did, but this is only the beginning of insults and sorrows. Socrates was tried and sentenced to drink the hemlock, but he was never humiliated as was Jesus before He went to His death. Peter drew a sword and smote off an ear of one of the mob, but Jesus commanded him to put up the sword, and He healed the ear of the wounded man saying: "*The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*" All the power of Heaven must have just about broken loose at this time in

answer to Jesus' Gethsemane prayer, but God's plans stayed the Heavenly hosts, and the mob proceeded to do their worst.

(3) The bitter cup Jesus drank was the humiliation of allowing the mob to actually bind God the Son. Only devil-possessed men would attempt such a thing.

(4) They led Him before Annas first, and then to Caiaphas. Jesus told the mob: "*This is your hour, and the power of darkness.*" Jesus knew that Satan and all his devil and demon contemporaries were being allowed to turn loose upon Him through every human channel at their command.

(5) When they began to smite Him, they added insults to injury, and the law allowed them to do it. But, in the face of all this, Jesus proclaims again His second coming to Caiaphas.

(6) They raked up false witnesses to testify against Him.

(7) The high priest called Him a blasphemer.

(8) They spat in His face.

(9) They blindfolded Him, and the crowd took turns in smiting Him, asking Him to prophesy who did it. Only devil-possessed men could or would do the damnable things they did to Jesus.

(10) Jesus' disciples having forsaken Him, Peter begins to curse and swear that he never knew Jesus; but, in the midst of it all, Jesus looks at Peter with all pity and tenderness and love, and this broke Peter's heart, and he repented and went out and wept his heart out for his Lord, later becoming an ardent and loyal disciple for Christ and Christianity. Luke gives us what, if properly interpreted, is the best insight into what else they did to Jesus, not fully recorded in detail. "*And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.*" The mob spent the whole night in persecution and blasphemy; and Jesus knew before all

this took place just what they were going to do to Him, and with Him. All this took place before He was led by the law before Herod, and then lastly before Pilate. The ignominy of this one night alone is sufficient to justify Jesus' prayer to forego this part of it all. But the end is not yet, for He must, in addition to this, stand before the courts, with all their hypocrisy. The abomination of all this cannot be portrayed in words. Pilate and Herod, and Herod and Pilate! Abominable perverters of law and justice! We have them with us today, and will have them through all the days, and their number is legion. There are a scarce few of any other kind.

Now Roman laws were not so unjust; but, as a Southern jurist has said, there were twenty-one perversions of Roman law by lawyers and the courts in the diabolical farce of a mock trial of Jesus, perverted justice and judgment, and sentence. What a ghastly and sickening spectacle! The people of the world have never misjudged lawyers, and laws, and courts nearly as unjustly as have this trio themselves misjudged the people. The Roman law profession had become corrupt, and the people simply followed in their trail, and a slimy one it was and still is.

History does not record any people having lost respect for law and order until law and order first lost respect for it themselves. Transgression of God's laws and commands have come first from a perverted leadership. Saul, the first king of Israel, failed to measure up. David became an adulterer, then a murderer. Solomon became estranged by marrying pagan wives, and brought disgrace all along the line, and so it goes on down through history. The perversion comes first from the leadership, and then from the people, and the nation is corrupted, and hell breaks loose.

Now the mob led Jesus before Pilate in the morning, to have Him convicted by every false act and accusation devils

and men could think of. Then Pilate, the judge of the law, began to function, and had Jesus scourged, and then made Him take the place of the murderer Barabbas.

Pilate then committed the most barbarous act of all, turning Jesus back to the mob and soldiers, to humiliate and persecute and destroy with all the hell-born chicanery devils could possess them with.

This whole band of soldiers and rabble took Jesus to the common public hall, where all the frothings of hell could see and vent their spleen on the only begotten Son of the Father in Heaven. And they stripped Him. One can hardly imagine, let alone realize, what this meant to the infallible Son of God, the One who had all power if He chose to use it to protect Himself. But He said, "*No, I will drink the cup my Father, 'who so loved the world,' has given me to drink.*" They plaited a crown of thorns and placed it on His head, and then smote Him to drive the thorns down in His flesh, and the blood ran down over the scarlet robe they had put upon Him, and they spat in His face, and bowed the knee and mocked Him with all the blasphemy demon-possessed men could formulate.

Now, the half of all their satanic perfidy and devil-possessed beastiality has never been told, for words can never portray it; but some of it has been and is being yet told, for when Pilate took a basin and washed his hands, declaring Jesus innocent, and no fault to be found in Him, and that he was not going to be responsible for the shedding of this just man's blood, the Jews cried out, "*Let his blood be on us and upon our children.*" And it has been, and still is, and they have cried out ever since. Jesus said, "*Ye shall be hated of all nations, then shall the end come.*" Oh, it is coming all right, in God's own good time, and the tribulation at that time will be according to the way the world treated God's Son at Calvary.

Now Jesus said He came to die on the Cross for the salvation of the world, but is it incredible that He should pray to forego all the hell-born persecution before the actual crucifixion. But let no man blaspheme Jesus Christ by saying He ever weakened or shrank from dying the death on the Cross as God planned for Him to do and Jesus volunteered to do before He came.

Jesus prayed before this crucial test came, as recorded in St. John, ch. 17.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in

thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

This is many times more than you or I dare say, and until we can say it truthfully, we had better never question

the Holy One, lest it be at our eternal peril, for we are the ones who are coming into judgment, and not Jesus Christ.

Now, just for argument's sake, suppose Jesus did weaken momentarily. Does that lessen the heroic in the sacrifice He made, not for any fault of His own, but to make it possible and easier for you and me to gain that eternal passport to Heaven, for time and eternity? Just what is our required individual responsibility to Jesus Christ, for all He voluntarily suffered, and sacrificed, and lay down His life for? Just what do we honestly and fairly and squarely owe Him for all that He has done to make it easier for you and me to gain an eternal home in Heaven? And have we paid the profound debt that we owe to God for all that He has done for you and me?

Dare we come before the judgment bar of God as we are right now? If not, why not get ready right now? That was and still is the prime objective Jesus came for, and surely should become the all-important objective for you and me to attain for time and eternity. *"Prepare to meet thy God."* And this is something you and I are going to have to do, whether we are prepared or not.

No lost soul will ever dare accuse God of not doing all that could reasonably be done to save that soul, for He has already done all that and more, so the burden will always rest right where it belongs, personally with you and me. If Jesus means anything to us, He means everything that we are, or ever hope to be, either for Him or against Him. We must make our choice, and God grant that we shall do it now, and that it shall be the right choice for time and eternity.

XV

JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL

JESUS' death upon the cross immortalized it. He said: *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."* The greater the goodness of a life, the more glorious the death of it.

Jesus knew He had not long to live upon this earth, for He said: I have finished the work my heavenly father hath given me to do. All wise men soon come to realize they have not long to live upon earth, and that their work is soon finished for good or ill. Death is not a curse but a blessing to a mankind that lives as we live. God never decreed death upon us. Satan brought that about. Death, like unto thunder, came by way of that which preceded it. But Satan's lightning stroke of death has been superseded by Jesus' irresistible power of the resurrection. Paul said: *"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*

Death and burial are simply laying away the mortal that the immortal may gain the eternal pre-eminence. There is only one royal way to die: that is in true loyalty to Jesus Christ. Jesus and Paul have by precept and example assured us that we can be so well prepared that we can welcome the death messenger when he comes, as come he will, and may be soon.

Jesus came down from Heaven to earth to give us a profound example of the routine reality of life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension up into Heaven that all wise-thinking, -reasoning mankind might attain the same general results. The marvelous things for which Jesus died on the Cross of Calvary surely are worth our striving for.

Jesus said, *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."*

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS

THE birth, life and death of Jesus upon earth caused amazement, but His resurrection brought about profound consternation. The people tried to explain Jesus' naturally raising others from the dead, but when He raised Himself by the power of the Holy Spirit of God they were dazzled and dumbfounded.

St. John records several incidents the three other gospel writers leave out. *"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."*

Acts 1:1 to 11 vividly portrays Jesus' ascension which was the crescendo, the grand finale of His temporal sojourn here upon earth.

XVII

THE HOLY GHOST PENTECOST

JESUS said before He ascended up into Heaven: "*For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*"

Acts 2: "*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*"

The outstanding and astounding principle of Pentecost is that God the Father and Jesus the Son would send the Holy Ghost to help save a humanity that persecuted and crucified Jesus as it did. God must have tremendously loved mankind to do this. Jesus said He did, and we have the proof.

Christianity is more than a formula; it is an established fact.

When the one hundred and twenty faithful followers of Jesus gathered together in one place in that upper room, praying for ten days, something happened. Sacred history shows mighty things have happened since Christians began to pray in accord with Jesus Christ.

The power of the Holy Spirit of God is sufficient to help us accomplish all God expects of us. Thousands of man-made religions have sought to make people better, but the Christian religion of Jesus Christ is the only one that makes people good in accordance with Jesus' commands.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

XVIII

PAUL'S MARVELOUS SPIRITUAL MIND DEVELOPMENT

THE mind is the generator through which every current of human life must develop into thought, word, and action. Wise minds only truly honor the God who gave them to us for that purpose.

Jesus said: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind.*"

Paul said: "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*"

Hence Jesus and Paul stress functional development of the mind. It produces that which it is cultured to produce. The mind we have is great enough to become good if we exercise it into godly direction. It makes or breaks every individual. A mind unused is terribly abused, for it stagnates and becomes infested with the world, the flesh and the devil. The mind that is never taught to bend will be broken some day with the strain it must endure. Great minds continually seek a rising growth, else they cease to be great. The mind is the receiving and sending telegraph instrument of every human life, but the operator must always be attentive and alert if the train of life is safely routed to its proper destination.

Acts 9 records Paul's first marvelous words: "*Who art thou, Lord? . . . What wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him . . . it shall be told thee what thou must do.*"

Saul (later called Paul), when shown to be wrong, immediately got right with God—a worthy example to all who are wise enough to profit by it. Paul gave to us Gentiles our Christian doctrine substantiating all Jesus' infallible commands. Paul was an efficient organizer; a great theologian; a versatile linguist speaking and writing several languages; a hero of the Christian faith, becoming a martyr for it.

Paul was the super orator of history, silencing the mobs with his oratory; his arguments and logic were unanswerable, convincing even the rulers when the mobs brought him before them.

Paul's own orations and writings best portray the true story of his gloriously changed life. The profoundly interesting book of Acts records the marvelous life of Paul and a few of his great orations. He first preached for a whole year at Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians. Everyone should read this marvelous book of Acts.

Paul, in his writings beginning with the book of Romans, recognizes and warns us against the same common enemy that Jesus did in no unmistakable terms. Satan and devils, according to his witness, harassed him through every device, and Paul said these fiendish attacks would be continued against us as long as we live here upon earth. Every biblical writer warns us to beware of Satan and his emissaries as being just as much a reality for evil as God is for good. One can know some things, yet understand very little about them. Our greatest perspectives should be God's supreme objectives for us.

Paul said the time would come when the people would not endure sound doctrine. Present world conditions pointedly show we are in that period.

Paul said, Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the

holy spirit of God. Looks like we are drunk with everything but the Spirit of God. The world spirit is satanic hate and destruction, growing in intensity from the beginning. Paul became immortal because he so gloriously immortalized Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of God (a lifetime example for all of us).

Romans: "*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. . . . For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; . . . For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . . For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. . . . And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. . . . Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. . . .*"

Corinthians: "*Let no man deceive himself. . . . Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. . . . And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*"

Galatians: "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he*

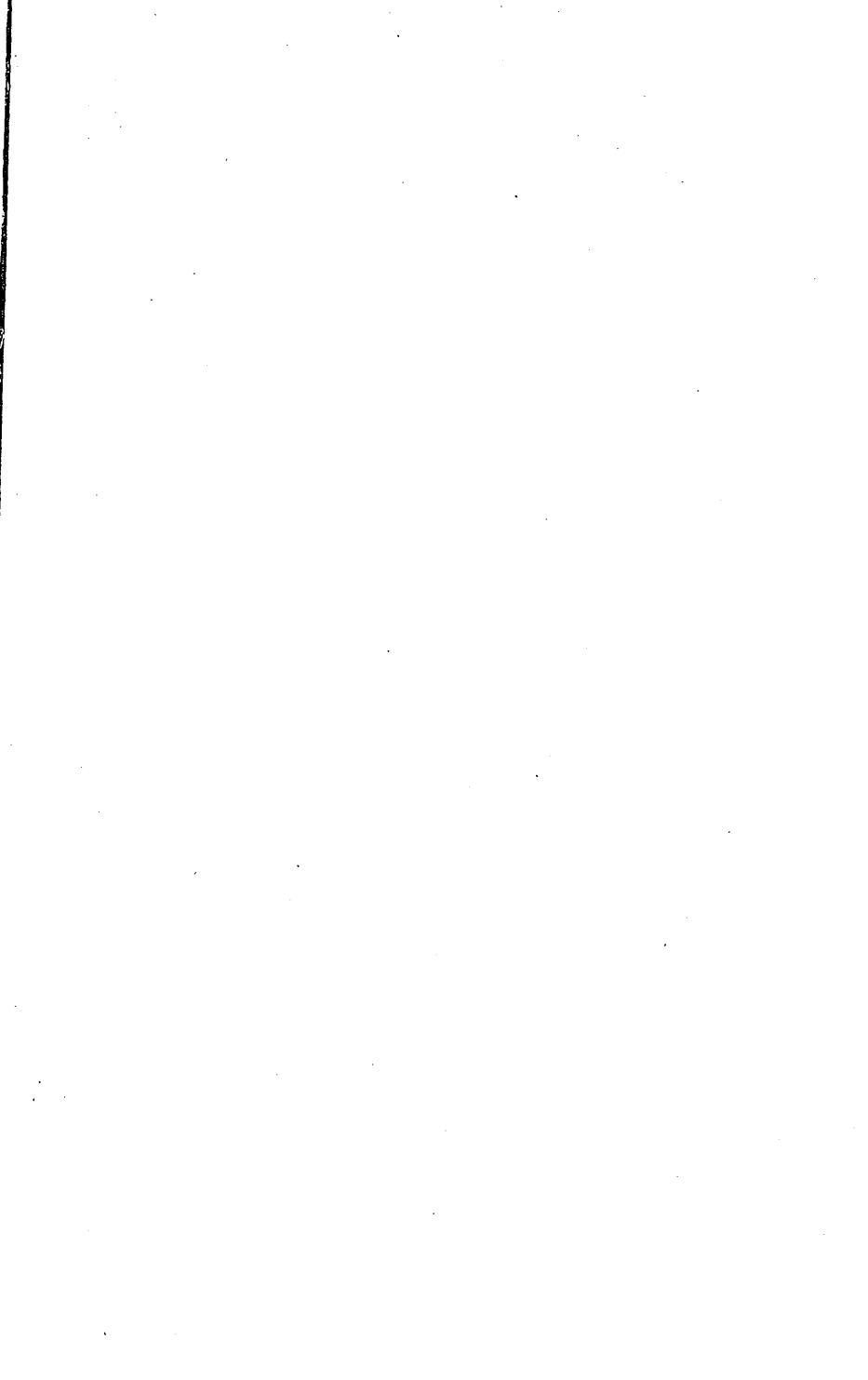
that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Ephesians: *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . ."*

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Jesus said, *"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."



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Jesus the divine
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